

Disability Now



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expert
opinion
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Shopping in
a wheelchair
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Discrimination –
how much do
you know?
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Money
problems
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An uncharitable budget

The Chancellor's Budget on 19 March did nothing to help The Spastics Society or to boost the voluntary sector.

Although he doubled the amount of charitable donations which will qualify for higher tax relief, from £5,000 to £10,000, this will have only a negligible effect on the Society's income, and on voluntary organisations generally, according to those charities who belong to the VAT Reform Group.

There was no relaxation of VAT. Instead it was extended to newspaper and magazine advertising. It is estimated that this will add another £30,000 to the Society's VAT bill for 1985/6 because it will hit personnel, publicity and legacies advertising. Last year (1984/5) the Society paid £500,000 in VAT which, unlike local authorities, it could not recover.

The VAT Reform Group has already expressed its disappointment. The 18 charities on its steering committee, including Help the Aged, RNIB, MENCAP and The Spastics Society, have calculated that the new VAT will add £387,000 to their advertising budget of £2.5 million.

"The latest VAT imposition does nothing but confirm our view that while the Chancellor may believe his actions promote the voluntary sector, his tax burdens continue to do just the reverse", said John Cox.

He noted how over the present Parliament additional responsibilities had been thrown on to voluntary organisations.

The Registered Homes Act, for example, meant that charities would have to spend more money to implement the proposals.

"Mrs Thatcher, for her part, has talked of co-operation with the voluntary sector," said John Cox. "Co-operation in our books means both giving and taking."

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Clare gets a cuddle

John F. Sculpher



How HRH the Duchess of Kent met Clare Pike and 39 other children at Vranch House School, page 13.

John Cox requests "urgent" meeting with Tony Newton

Where will the money come from?

John Cox, director of The Spastics Society, has written to Tony Newton, Minister for Social Security, asking for an "urgent" meeting.

He wants to discuss the overall effect of Government policies on disabled people.

"Recent Government measures have had the effect of adding to the pressure on the already inadequate provision within the residential sector," he said.

He mentioned the impact on voluntary organisations of the new standards for residential care laid down in the Registered Homes Act and the Code of Practice, *Home Life*.

"The estimated cost of applying the legislation for the Society (which many local authorities are insisting on immediately) is £6 million – an impossible task".

He also mentioned the extension of VAT to newspaper advertising and, most recently, Tony Newton's announcement on 21 March which set new limits on DHSS board and lodging payments for residential care.

Although a higher figure of £170 has been set for DHSS sponsorship of physically dis-

abled people, John Cox did not think it was always high enough to meet the staffing costs of caring for multiply-handicapped disabled people.

"I am not optimistic that local authorities will feel able or willing to top up these amounts," said John Cox.

"Where will the money come from?" he asked Tony Newton.

TUC initiative on employment

The TUC has taken a major initiative on the employment of disabled people.

It has published a guide which aims to encourage trade unionists to lead the way in securing more and better paid jobs for disabled people.

The *TUC Guide on the Employment of Disabled People*, launched at a conference on 21 March, explains the legal requirements on employers, the help available and what union representatives can do.

Union officials, it says, should check on their company's formal written policy on employing disabled people. They should press employers to fulfill the 3 per cent quota and make sure that employers are aware of the assistance available from the Manpower Services Commission.

They should see that job advertisements clearly welcome applications from suitable disabled people.

They should also make sure

that employers take all possible steps to assist and keep an employee who has become disabled, check that disabled people have equal opportunities for training and promotion, show the employer how a special need can often be easily met, and encourage disabled employees to participate in union affairs.

"The trade union movement could have an enormous impact in this area," says Eileen Fry, The Spastics Society's Employment Research Officer. "One hopes they will follow up this initiative and the recommendations of the guide will be implemented."

Speaking at the conference were Brian Swindell from MSC and Peter Jacques, Secretary of the TUC Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee. Ray Buckton, Chairman of the Committee, said that the TUC was reconsidering its policies on disabled people, and a report would go to the General Council after the conference.

Lollipop lady may benefit other women carers

Extending Invalid Care Allowance to married and cohabiting women was not one of the Chancellor's Budget priorities.

But what the Chancellor will not give willingly, the Commission of the European Economic Community may be able to wrest from him – if a test case goes according to plan.

An EEC directive on the equal treatment of men and women in the social security system which came into force in January has not been accepted by the Government because the Government does not classify married women as part of the workforce.

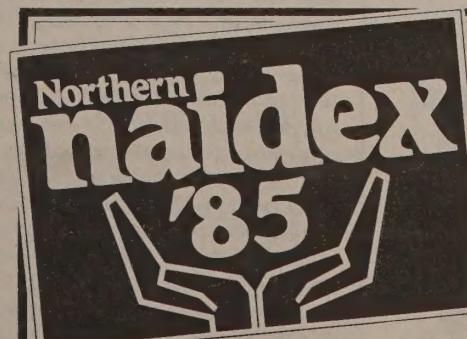
Yet last month Judge Byrt of the Society Security Appeals Tribunal ruled that the Government was in breach of the direc-

tive in the case of Mrs Drake of Worsley, Manchester. Mrs Drake had to give up her job as a lollipop lady to care for her mother.

The case has now been referred to the European Court where the ruling is expected to be upheld later this year.

Meanwhile, The Spastics Society recommends that female carers who think they meet all the qualifications for Invalid Care Allowance apart from marital status should put in a claim. If the claim is rejected, they should appeal, citing the EEC directive.

Providing the European Court upholds the ruling – and the law remains unchanged – they will receive not only the £21.50 per week Invalid Care Allowance, but back payments too.



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Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

PHAB is not just for young people

Congratulations on the February issue of *Disability Now* which I found to be varied, interesting and informative.

From my limited knowledge, your article on the Outsiders Club was a fair summary and it will be interesting to watch for developments.

However, I feel I must correct your paragraph which states that "voluntary organisations have not been very successful at organising social get-togethers - which tend to be for one disability anyway - and PHAB caters only for people aged 15-30."

I recognise that numbers are not always a sign of success but the growth in the number of PHAB clubs in recent years would seem to indicate that they are meeting a real need, part of which is providing a social get-together.

It is certainly *not* true that PHAB caters only for people aged 15-30.

There are an increasing number of junior clubs because we recognise that the earlier social integration can be introduced the less problems it is likely to create. There are also all-aged clubs which cater for up to 60 and 70 year olds, and clubs for the older age group have been a feature of our work for some time.

Certainly PHAB began with the youth club age range and our aim is that all physically disabled people should have the opportunity of joining in social groups of their choice.

Whilst we are progressing towards that goal, we believe that the 450 PHAB clubs in the United Kingdom do present a real opportunity for social get-togethers and for the development of personal and social relationships.

Terry Thompson
Director of PHAB
Tavistock House North
Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HX

Meldreth parents seek reassurance

I wrote in January, in reply to the letter from Rutland House School, agreeing with all they said regarding the policy of the Society for our 19+ severely handicapped children. I was asked to withhold my letter as the in-depth interview with Freddie Green (*Disability Now*, February) would clear up some of the points.

I am sad to say that there were no hopeful answers. In fact, Freddie Green put the onus of placings on John Belcher's department - out of education, into social services.

Nor did he give the parents of Meldreth Manor School an answer to the question put at the AGM, which your columns failed to report, or perhaps giving it the place the Society wants it to be - the back of the queue. The question asked Freddie Green for statistics on the placing of our 19+ multiply handicapped people and the criteria used for such placings.

Maybe this new post that is to be created to research such questions will do a feasibility study into core and cluster facilities. But don't take too long because time is running out.

I have asked about local authority provision in my area - there is none. Our choice lies between expensive places like the Steiner-Camphill Trust, MENCAP, Home Farm Trust or L'arche.

When can we expect a Spastics Society Trust with a continuation of the fine start you have given our children? Freddie Green must appreciate that their learning abilities do not stop at the magical age of 19.

Perhaps I am over-reacting. Would parents who read your paper contact me and assure me of their satisfaction and the happy ending with a fulfilling lifestyle that their children have achieved?

If not, and my fears are correct, would they please let us

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SERVICES TO DISABLED PEOPLE FROM THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

THE DIRECTOR

Six of the best

In June 1982 the Executive Council approved a re-statement of The Spastics Society's aims for the prevention and treatment of cerebral palsy and the promotion of independence - or self-determination - for cp people.

As you all know, those aims were translated into specific objectives for 1984/5 and we have done the same exercise for 1985/6.

However, we now need to be looking much further ahead so that plans can be made for the next 5 years or more. Given the shifting sands of legislation I am conscious that we shouldn't think further ahead than that.

In this column last November I said that my prime objective was to prepare a long term corporate plan for the Society which will provide the working guidelines for its financial and operational management. I said that I hoped to achieve this by November 1985.

know what problems are facing us.

Jane Dick
Meldreth Manor School Parents' Association
Fenney Lane
Meldreth
Royston
Herts.

A proper staff newspaper

Following John Cox's comment (*Disability Now*, January) that he hopes staff communication and attitudes have improved over the past year, I recently prepared a report on communications with the Society's Regions Division (for a course I am taking.)

I asked about 50 members of staff in Regions and Social Services for their views on the present effectiveness of our communications.

Simon Crompton

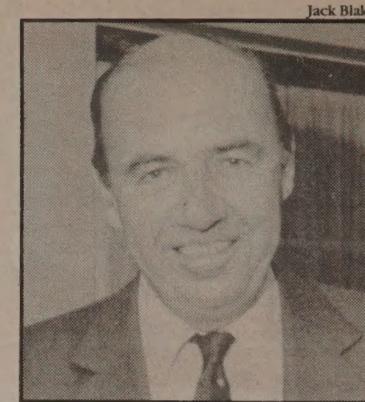


With undivided voice they said the various unrelated missives from HQ and Regional Office which fall like confetti on their desks and the fragmentation of information led to a feeling of isolation, frustration and ignorance about the members of staff in other departments and what or who they were or did.

The present forms of general communication, *Disability Now* and the regional news bulletins, are aimed specifically at consumer groups, local affiliated groups or the general public.

It was felt that a staff newspaper, incorporating items of general knowledge, VAT reform campaigns, personnel circulars, staff representative notes, etc. could be collated and sent once a month to all members of staff.

This, surely, would have the result of making members of staff feel that we are all part of one



John Cox

gions division, Nicky Rowlands, finance division, and John Tizard, social services division.

Some of these names will be known to you already.

It is my hope that the members of the core group, with their combined breadth and depth of knowledge and experience both inside and outside the Society, will make an invaluable contribution to the development of a corporate strategy.

They will have to travel and discuss ideas with many sections of the Society. The time scale is very short. So I would ask anyone who is approached to give full co-operation and to treat any request from the group as a priority.

As I said in November, one of my personal objectives is to foster further the role of volunteers in the activities of the Society and to encourage the growth of local groups.

I would therefore ask chairmen of regions to give this ambitious venture their blessing and co-operation and to keep local groups informed of our plans.

John

The first stage in corporate planning must be to consider what strategy is needed to meet objectives, and then develop the tactics for achieving it. I cannot do this alone. Nor would it be appropriate or practicable for all the directors to be involved in every stage of the planning process.

I have therefore established a nucleus, or "core group" of directors and staff to take responsibility for developing an initial strategy which will be submitted by the directors to the Executive Council in November.

The core group consists of myself as director, Angus Reid, my deputy, Linda Avery of the directorate, Anne Murphy, re-

firm, working for the same end.

Alysia Hunt
County Organiser, Berkshire
We are already looking into the problem - Editor

What is "adult"?

I read Peter Knight's article, "A right to be adult" (*Disability Now*, February '85), at first with great interest and then again with dismay.

The philosophical implications behind the concept of the profoundly handicapped becoming adult are complex and fraught with difficulties. Unfortunately, we were given an article on the right of the profoundly handicapped to be treated in an adult way, an opinion which is widely accepted and put into practice.

My dismay was further compounded by the level of generalisations and apparent lack of objectivity. I would illustrate this with three examples.

Firstly, with regard to the concept of "becoming adult", it is stated that "growing up is a continuous process... and it is possible that some people never do become 'adult'".

If the concept of an "adult" is not defined, it will always remain a matter for subjective conjecture as to whether "adulthood" has been achieved.

In an educational context this is nothing more than an admission of failure. Education implies systematic facilitation. Systematic implies to a plan; and without a goal, it is not possible to arrive. Perhaps this is why some people never do become adult!

A similar lack of definition is illustrated by the dismissal of objective record-keeping. "It is difficult to find a procedure which is satisfactory without producing a book some 2½in thick".

I am tempted to say that 2½in would appear to be a fairly economical measure of a pupil's/student's all round development!

Educationalists have a duty, both to their clients and society at large, to make their goals explicit and describe the services provided clearly and in a quantifiable manner.

Finally, Mr. Knight states that

most of the Dene College students have had their development encouraged until the age of 11 and then stopped because the adults concerned were unwilling to recognise that profoundly intellectually impaired people have the right to adulthood. If this generalisation is based upon the author's own experience, I can only assume that it has been severely limited and abnormally so.

I would welcome any objective evidence he has of this indictment of parents and teachers, particularly as it is stated that "the majority (of students) have previously attended schools run by The Spastics Society".

Roger Billinge
Deputy Head Teacher
Meldreth Manor School
Meldreth
Royston, Herts

Anyone there?

My plea in the December issue elicited only one reply. We urgently need your help if we are to complete our study of the health and social needs of physically handicapped young adults.

The study is being carried out by ourselves through St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, Paddington, London, and is sponsored by The Spastics Society.

We are interested in contacting anyone with a physical handicap who is aged 16-26 and living either in the W2, W9, W10 or W11 London postal districts, or in the Wycombe area of South Buckinghamshire (e.g. Bledlow, Bradenham, Chepping, Ellesborough, Fanley, Fingest, Hambleton, The Hampdens, Hedsor, Hughenden, Iblstone, Lacey Green, The Marrows, Medmenham, Princes Risborough, Radnage, Stokenchurch, Turville, High Wycombe, West Wycombe, or Woodburn).

Physically handicapped young adults meeting the age and address criteria who would be willing to take part in our research should contact me at the address below.

Dr Andrew P Thomas
Community Paediatric Research Unit
St Mary's Hospital Medical School
5A Netherhall Gardens
London NW3 5RN

REPORTS

CSIE Training Days

1981 Education Act - delays and lack of funding

A series of 8 regional training days on the 1981 Education Act, attended by a total of nearly 900 people, ended in Exeter on 7 March. They were jointly organised by The Spastics Society's Centre for Studies on Integration in Education (CSIE) and the Children's Legal Centre (CLC) in London.

The series succeeded in bringing together parents, professionals and administrators to discuss, exchange ideas and make new contacts. Most of the delegates said that normally they did not have the opportunity to take part in such a "multi-disciplinary" event.

Education administrators and professionals alike stressed the extra work involved in the new procedures which came into force in April 1983.

Local education authorities (LEAs) complained about the lack of central Government funding to help implement the new law. For while the Act states that children with special educational needs should now receive their education in ordinary schools, only £2 million (1984-85) has been provided by the Government for 10 week in-service training courses for a small number of teachers in ordinary primary and comprehen-

sive schools.

Parents and parent groups deplored the delay experienced by families during the new assessment and statementing processes under the new Act. The "record" so far appears to be 16 months from the beginning of the assessment to the delivery of the draft statement of needs.

A significantly large number of parents complained of the difficulty they had experienced - or were still experiencing - in trying to secure an integrated placement for their handicapped child.

Starting in Cardiff in January 1984, the day conferences have been held in Coventry, Cambridge, London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Brighton and Exeter.

Besides integration in education, other issues have been dealt with: the importance of involving parents in assessments and their child's statement; greater flexibility by professionals to achieve the much talked about "partnership"; parental access to information about their child (now guaranteed under the Act); pre-school provision at one end, and 16-19 education at the other; and the importance of consulting children about their feelings on assessments and placements (now formal Government guidance to LEAs).

By the end of the series it was evident that those who administer and use the new law realise that so far it has provided no more than a basic framework for the education of children with special needs. How the Act and its regulations are interpreted, and the development of integration policies in individual local authorities are therefore all the more important.

Peter Newell of the Children's Legal Centre commented: "The

overall context of cutbacks in education provision in many areas has led to new pressures on professionals by their employing authorities to limit the advice they give about a child and the proposals they make for meeting special needs in accordance with available resources... Public discussion has undoubtedly strengthened professional determination to resist such pressures collectively."

The series has also inspired direct local response. After the Cardiff meeting the local Interpol Mental Handicap Group decided to hold a day-conference for parents on the 1981 Educa-

tion Act. After the Cambridge meeting, parents formed a local support group to help individual families and negotiate with the LEA on future policy and practice in special education. And after the London conference the Inner London Education Authority asked CSIE to help organise and take part in a training day for ILEA educational remedial staff and educational psychologists.

Mark Vaughan
Co-ordinator, CSIE

More conferences are being planned for later this year. Contact CSIE, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ.

plus 40 per cent of any cost above that.

Mr Fowler attempted to soften the blow of his announcement by stating that exemptions account for almost one half of all chargeable courses of dental treatment and three quarters of prescription charges.

Those who are not exempt are assumed to be able to afford the increase.

In the debate which followed Michael Meadowcroft MP asked why the Secretary of State had chosen this time to introduce a substantial increase in charges when he expected to increase income from the limited list by £75 million. Mr. Fowler answered by saying that the Government will be providing £800 million more for the Health Service next year and that charges must make a contribution.

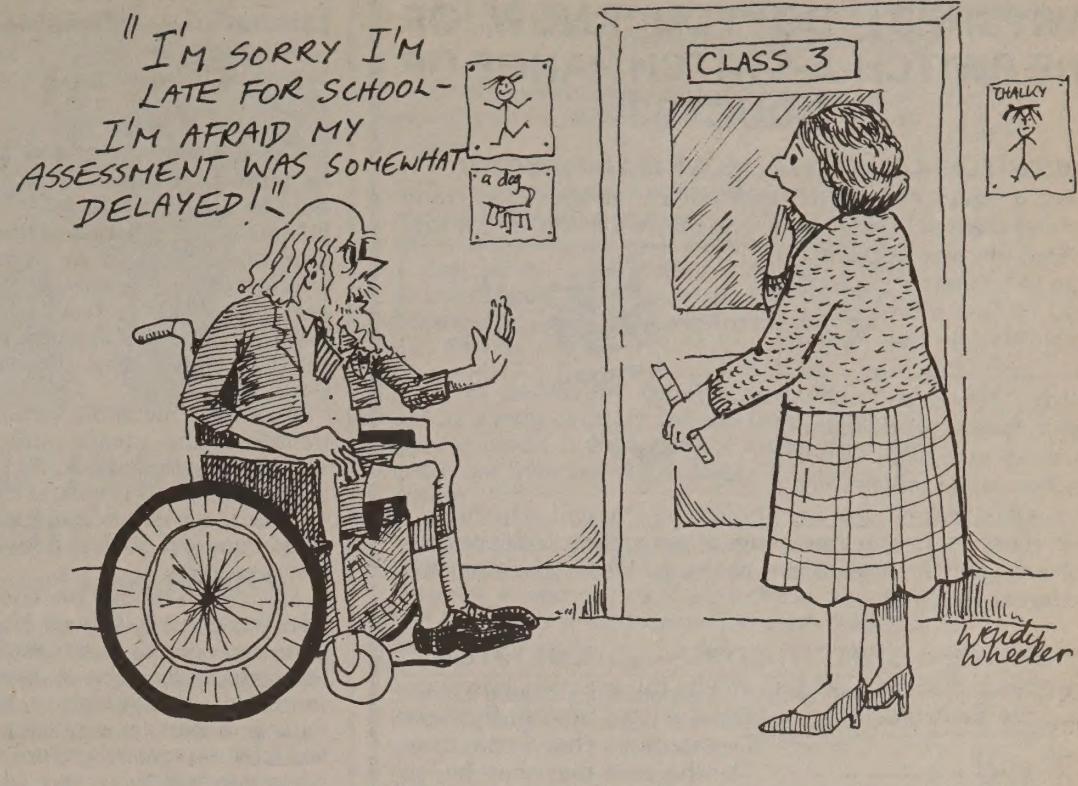
A number of MPs felt that the list of chronic conditions which enjoy exemption is relatively limited and asked that its scope be widened.

Mr Fowler gave an undertaking that he would examine this.

Steel asks for uprate in earnings limit

David Steel MP asked the Social Services Secretary if he would uprate the £4 earnings limit for persons in receipt of supplementary benefit in such a way as to restore the value it had in 1975. Raymond Whitney, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, replied that there were no plans to do so but that the treatment of earnings was one of the matters considered by the supplementary benefit review last year. The proposals arising from the review would be announced "in due course".

Sharron Saint Michael



London Regional Conference

Limitations of Insight

If at the end of a day, having attended your first conference, you feel a little tired yet happy and invigorated and maybe somewhat bewildered, then perhaps it was a conference worth attending.

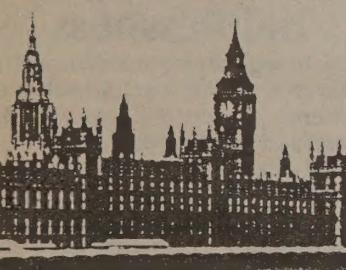
At the London Regional Conference at the Tara Hotel, Kensington on 17 February, I recognised many faces but could not put names to all of them.

I was surprised to see so many Spastics Society members of staff and felt that it was more like a Society get-together than a regional conference. But some of them were needed to run the workshop sessions.

In the first session, I attended Sue Smith's workshop on "an ordinary life". I wanted to hear the general view. Sue Smith, the NE Regional Services Officer, impressed me as a person, and it was obvious that she had given the subject a lot of thought, but what she had to say really needed 4 hours. Only the bare bones of the subject were covered in one hour, which left me in a state of frustration. Perhaps this was because I did not have any preconceived ideas on the subject and so what was

Continued on page 4

MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Limited list of NHS drugs increased

Norman Fowler made a statement on 21 February on the limited list of NHS drugs.

The range of drugs in certain categories which will be available on prescription under the NHS has increased from the originally proposed list of 30 to over 100. The categories are antacids, laxatives, analgesics, cough and cold remedies, bitters and tonics, vitamins and tranquillisers and sedatives.

Most of the list will be generic, that is unbranded products, although there are still some proprietary medicines on the list where no generic preparations currently exist.

The saving in the drugs bill is estimated at £75 million.

Disabled people's access to vote

An amendment to the Representation of the People Bill ensuring that buildings used as polling stations should be accessible to disabled electors was moved by John Hannam MP (Conservative) during the Committee Stage.

Postal or proxy voting for disabled people "must be seen as a second-rate alternative to a vote in person", he said, and he urged the House to ensure that polling stations were made accessible to everyone.

The principle received considerable all-party support and the Government gave an undertaking that an amendment would be tabled at Report Stage.

Accordingly, the Home Secretary, Leon Brittan MP, moved the amendment, placing a duty on district councils and London Boroughs in England and Wales to ensure that "as far as is reasonable and practicable" only places which are accessible to disabled electors are designated as polling stations.

The amendment was accepted on 24 February at Report Stage.

The Bill received its Second Reading in the Lords on 13 March.

Prescription charges go up

The NHS basic prescription charge has gone up to £2.

Norman Fowler, Social Services Secretary, made the announcement on 11 March.

The increase was necessary to help offset the cost of the drugs bill which now stands at £1.2 billion a year, he said.

The Government felt the increase in charges was fairer than narrowing the range of exemption categories; it was right to protect those in need from the impact of charges.

Dental charges are also going up. The maximum charge for any single course of treatment is £17



It seems strange that while we have national institutions to look after the interests of children, animals, the arts and sport, we do not have a council to look after the interests of those who, apart from animals, are the least able to look after themselves, and therefore require our help - Earl Attlee speaking in the House of Lords, 20 February.

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to Watch it! Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

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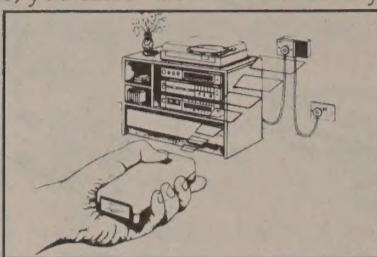
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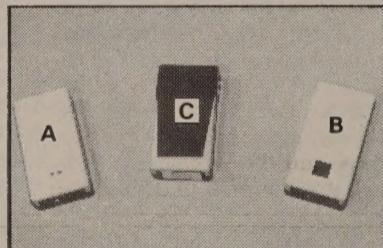
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To.....

REPORTS

Limitations of Insight

Continued from page 3
presented to me was, in a way, a shock.

The title of the workshop was changed from "an ordinary life" to "normalisation", so I was faced with an age old problem - what is "normal"? We discussed things that would help us to attain a "normal life" - like money, independence, friends, health, support, etc. and we decided that everyone - normal or otherwise - has these things.

What gets me about disabled people is the mental attitude which holds them back. We are all normal, and it is what we put into life that will determine what we get out of it. Society does not owe us a living.

My next session, on education, was given by Felicity Evans, from the Society's Centre for Studies into Integration in Education. This was mainly a fact-finding discussion, a good one, and a lot of personal experience was put forward.

In the afternoon we were privileged to become the first viewers of *Insight*, the Society's new film about CP and the Society's work. It certainly was interesting - although the audience, both able-bodied and disabled, tore it to bits afterwards. I suppose that every CP person has their own ideas of how we should like to be seen by the media.

I'm not sure that the brain functions as the film would have us believe. Astronaut-type men giving out instructions, and morons misrepresenting them!

Also, if you knew nothing about CP and the film was your first introduction to it, you would be likely to think that all CP people were in wheelchairs, that CP only affects adults, and that people with CP are not affected in any other way, mentally or physically.

After the film we had a general discussion, at times rather heated, which I do not think some of the Society staff enjoyed. But then they are employed to work for CP people and now and again they have to be brought into line!

Though I enjoyed my first conference, I shall rebel if they are all so wishy-washy!

At future conferences perhaps the caterers could be asked not to serve the first course in tall-stemmed glasses?

Hilary Lane
Secretary, N London Group

PE for the mentally handicapped

Challenging!

"P.E. for the Multiply Handicapped - an Insight into Individual Potential" was the first conference to be organised by The Spastic Society's Sports and Recreation Department.

It was held at Park Crescent, London, on 2 March, and attracted over 50 people.

The day was arranged in two parts: six guest speakers in the morning and a choice of seminar groups in the afternoon.

Dr. Bob Price, Director of the British Sports Association for the Disabled, argued that any physical education programme must be adapted to individual needs.

He stressed that PE programmes should maximise ability rather than minimise disability.

Paul Barber, Development Officer of the Amateur Swimming Association, discussed the benefits of swimming, both for recreation and for building up self-esteem and confidence.

Alan Kemp, Head of PE of the Society's Beaumont College, gave an interesting talk on the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the work done at Beaumont.

He was particularly keen that the award should be something that people worked for, that demands should be placed upon them, so that the achievement would mean something.

Colin Rains, former Head of Creative Studies at Trent Polytechnic, talked about developing athletic skills. People must be encouraged to take part, he said. Initially athletics could be seen as just running, jumping and throwing, and from that a programme could be developed which would allow a person to move on to more formal athletic events if he had the motivation and skill.

David Owens, Deputy Principal of the Society's Churchtown Farm, discussed the advantages of outdoor activities such as climbing and canoeing.

He admitted that they don't



Jamie Scurlock sailing "Susie", one of Churchtown Farm's cruisers.

suit everybody and that most people have no desire to participate. It is therefore essential to have skilled staff who will introduce disabled people to outdoor pursuits and grade the challenges.

Finally, Stephen Pain, Education Officer of the Health Education Council, spoke about health and fitness. He contrasted the sport taught in schools which stresses success with a more individual approach which emphasises exercise as positive and enjoyable.

Overall, an interesting day, which challenged many traditional attitudes.

But it is a shame that a conference of this kind tends to attract volunteers and professionals who are already committed to these ideas.

Alan Yeo
Dene College

Living Options Seminar

(1) What about the cost?

Amid all the information about living options for disabled people that was presented to us at the Tara Hotel, London, on 10 March, the most revealing, and for many of us the most valuable, contribution came from Eileen Milnes and her CP daughter, Anne. We all admired the way they virtually argued out in front of us the problems and heart-searching that is likely to occur when someone leaves home.

My overall impression of the seminar was that individual living needs are infinitely varied, ranging from the severely physically handicapped but mentally competent person who has a strong desire to live independently, to the physically and mentally handicapped person

who needs to live with other people.

Furthermore, there are many types of provision, and care facilities can be equally varied.

Yet there was virtually no discussion on the all important question of financing these options.

It is usually assumed that the cheapest option is to live at home for as long as possible. But this can continue only if visiting home care services are extended, and if greater use is made of short-term care facilities to give carers more frequent breaks and to accustom the disabled person to the prospect of eventually having to live away.

Perhaps we should have a publicity campaign to encourage greater use of the Society's short-term care and holiday facilities.

Some of us felt that there should be a cost analysis of the various living options to help us in our dealings with local authorities.

It was recognised at the seminar that, disabled or not, we all have the right to make choices and to take risks. But rights are meaningless without resources. Some apparent rights may be financially unobtainable for some disabled people; even non-disabled people have to live within their means.

In the end, local authorities will have to pay the costs of care, either by providing it themselves, or by paying for provision by others. And they are going to compare costs.

To sum up, the seminar helped to inform us of the options available and the policies to implement them.

However, some of us were doubtful whether the benefits derived from the seminar justified its obviously high cost.

Dr. Norman Burman
Chairman of the W. Surrey Group

(2) A feeling of helplessness

The living options seminar on 10 March was very useful both for parents of cerebral palsy children and cerebral palsy adults.

All the speakers gave excellent information, but by far the most interesting were Eileen and Anne Mills. Their frankness to each other was much admired by the parents present.

The most boring part of the day was a film about independent living. Although quite interesting, it was not really relevant to me.

Lunch was an obstacle course that most of the disabled people had to run. When will Society staff learn that some CP able-bodied need help as much as those in wheelchairs?

The person who left the greatest impression on me was a parent from Croydon who has a multiply-handicapped child. She spoke to those of us who were in Eileen and Anne Mills' group. Her desperate need for help left me with a feeling of helplessness.

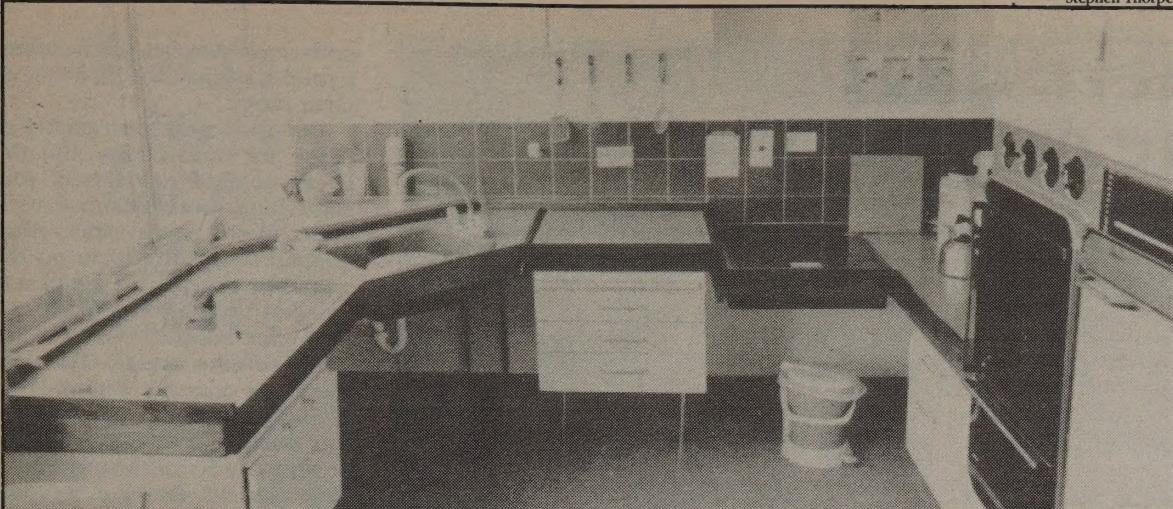
Her problem was one in hundreds. She felt abandoned not only by social services but, more importantly, by The Spastics Society.

It is not only the intelligent CP people who need help but also the parents of multiply-handicapped people. They need a break from the most demanding 24-hour-a-day job that anyone could possibly imagine.

I hope The Spastics Society holds more one-day seminars, not only in the regions but in local areas.

Denise Bloomfield
Vice-chairperson,
London Region

Stephen Thorpe



How to adapt a kitchen for someone who is in a wheelchair.

"Solutions devised at Castle Priory have actually been built"

Stephen Thorpe reports on a practical course for architects and administrators

How would you adapt an 18-storey tower block to provide around 90 flats for elderly people, some physically disabled?

Or a mews flat approached by an impossibly steep and narrow staircase for a single elderly lady?

Or an old 3-storey town house for a woman with multiple sclerosis, her husband, 2 children, daughter and son-in-law, and 2 greyhounds?

For the tenth year running, we have been tackling these sort of problems at Castle Priory College.

"Housing and Residential Accommodation for People with Disabilities" (13-15 February) was as usual very well attended, though I would have liked to see more than 9 architects and surveyors out of 52 people, and more than one representative from The Spastics Society.

There are 2 reasons why this course is so valuable and so successful.

First, it brings together architects, occupational therapists and other professionals, such as grants officers, who are all involved in the business of enabling people to continue to live in their own homes.

Second, it is intensely practical.

The bulk of the course is taken

up by an exercise in which a group of 6 or 7 people from different professions tackle a real problem brought by a member of the group. And it is tackled in detail — personal and family situation, layout and construction of the building, money available, building and fire regulation constraints.

Each group has to present both its brief and its solution (with large scale drawings) to the assembled course.

Exactly how the house is to be adapted around the person or family can be as much a problem as deciding on the best solution.

While knowledge and concern are growing, the financial resources available are diminishing and increasingly at risk.

The Improvement Grant for owner-occupiers is 75 per cent (occasionally 90 per cent) up to a maximum of £10,200 (£13,400 in cities). But out of this must come VAT on most of the work and probably architect's fees, and still there is 25 per cent (or 10 per cent) to make up.

The owner-occupier is usually better-off for assistance than a tenant. One of this year's cases at Castle Priory concerned a house owned by a local authority whose annual budget for adaptations fell far below what was needed to adapt this one house to a minimum standard.

No wonder that many adaptations are less than adequate from the start.

Nevertheless, many good, workable and often imaginative solutions arise from the course and some are taken back to the local authority or family for fresh consideration. Solutions devised at Castle Priory have actually been built.

And what of those 3 cases mentioned just now?

Despite misgivings by many of the people on the course, the tower block could become quite

CASTLE PRIORY

In between the problem-solving there are talks. This year Dr. Muir Gray, community physician for Oxford, talked about the problems of disability and old age, and we heard the views of two disabled people from the Hampshire Centre for Independent Living.

Every year the approach to problems of adaptation becomes increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable, and the concern for clients more detailed and understanding. Familiar and easy options like moving the family to another house are no longer ventured: most clients want to stay where they are amongst family, friends and sources of support.

Cases 2, 6 and 8 do not constitute discrimination.

Cases 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 constitute discrimination.

For answers and explanation, see below

Test your knowledge

Do these cases constitute discrimination against disabled people?

Yes No

1 Holiday-makers were refused drinks in a Teignmouth pub because they were mentally handicapped.

2 As a result of major surgery, Mr K has to have a special diet of fish, white meat, fresh green vegetables, milk and soft fruit. It costs an average of £3 a day. The Supplementary Benefit Officer awarded him a diet allowance of £3.05 a week. On appealing, Mr K was awarded the full cost, i.e. £21 a week.

3 J.A. of Southend, a blind person, wished to attend a parliamentary debate. Guide dogs are not permitted in the Strangers' Gallery and she could not leave her dog outside. She missed the debate.

4 At a public meeting organised by The Spastics Society there was a young woman whose disability made it necessary for her to wear trousers. She had been turned down for a job under a "skirt only" rule.

5 Some mentally handicapped people were refused a group booking at a holiday camp in Essex because they were mentally handicapped.

6 E., a woman with cerebral palsy, was refused admission to a cinema. She had arrived late and the cinema was full.

7 When the City of London held a ceremony to honour those who had died in the Falklands war, a newspaper reported that some servicemen who had been disabled in action and wanted to see the ceremony were thought to be a security risk. They were advised to stay at home and watch it on TV.

8 "If I could afford it I would buy hard-wearing clothes. I have difficulty dressing because I have the use of only one arm and I tear my clothes easily. Shoes with leather uppers are expensive so I have to settle for the cheaper ones which don't last so long..."

For answers and explanation, see below

a community, with security, privacy, landscaping at ground level, services such as laundry or hairdresser at intermediate levels, and the whole building directly managed by its occupants.

The elderly lady could be living in a vastly improved, very attractive flat with a stair lift for access, and the woman with ms currently imprisoned in the

basement could have both privacy and improved access inside and outside the house.

Adaptations can significantly improve your whole house, but it requires experience, care and often intense discussion.

Why not come next year?

Stephen Thorpe has been consultant architect to The Spastics Society.



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DISCRIMINATION AND DISABLED PEOPLE will be available from the Lobbying Department, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. It will be free to the Society's staff and local groups, but a charge will be made for bulk orders.

This month The Spastics Society becomes a national managing agency for the Community Programme which is funded and administered by the Manpower Services Commission.

At present there are about 80 places and we hope to increase them to 200 in the first year.

The Community Programme in Middlesbrough is the largest scheme run by the Society. It has 50 employees, at present evenly divided between men and women.

The aim of the Community Programme is to give temporary employment (for 52 weeks) to adults who have been unemployed for a long time or never employed at all. During that time they learn skills and obtain work experience which will improve their chances of getting a full-time job.

Since June 1983, when the Middlesbrough agency started, 120 people have been employed of whom 25 per cent have moved on to permanent jobs.

All our employees have been able-bodied; sadly, I have only ever had one applicant who was disabled.

However, during that time, a lot of help has been given to elderly and disabled people in the community.

Our first task was setting up a playscheme for disabled children which ran 5 full-days a week over the whole summer holiday in 1983, and again last year.

The local MARCHESI centre lent us space and we employed 8 play care workers for 35 children. (What would happen to these play care workers after the holidays was still being negotiated with the local education authority at 5 pm on the Friday before the Monday opening. In fact, they are seconded to special schools where they help with essential chores.)

The playscheme was my first experience of the "parental dump". Some parents would not even cross the threshold but left their child at the front door with no food or change of clothing. Without any prompting, the play team provided clothing and food out of their own pocket.

The team did an excellent job, organising outings to parks, museums and places of interest and even, to my amazement and horror, taking 5 year-olds to the

Thinking of fostering a mentally handicapped child?

Then give a thought to Sammy:



Sammy is a young looking 16 year old boy of Asian descent, who has been living in a Childrens' Home for nine years, and would benefit greatly from a long term placement with a foster family.

Sammy is a good looking boy who is severely retarded and profoundly deaf.

However, he can communicate using simple sign language and shows great affection towards people he knows and trusts.

He has no difficulty in washing and dressing himself and knows what he does and does not like to eat.

Sammy's parents see him regularly but are not in a position to care for him, although we would want their contact with him to be maintained.

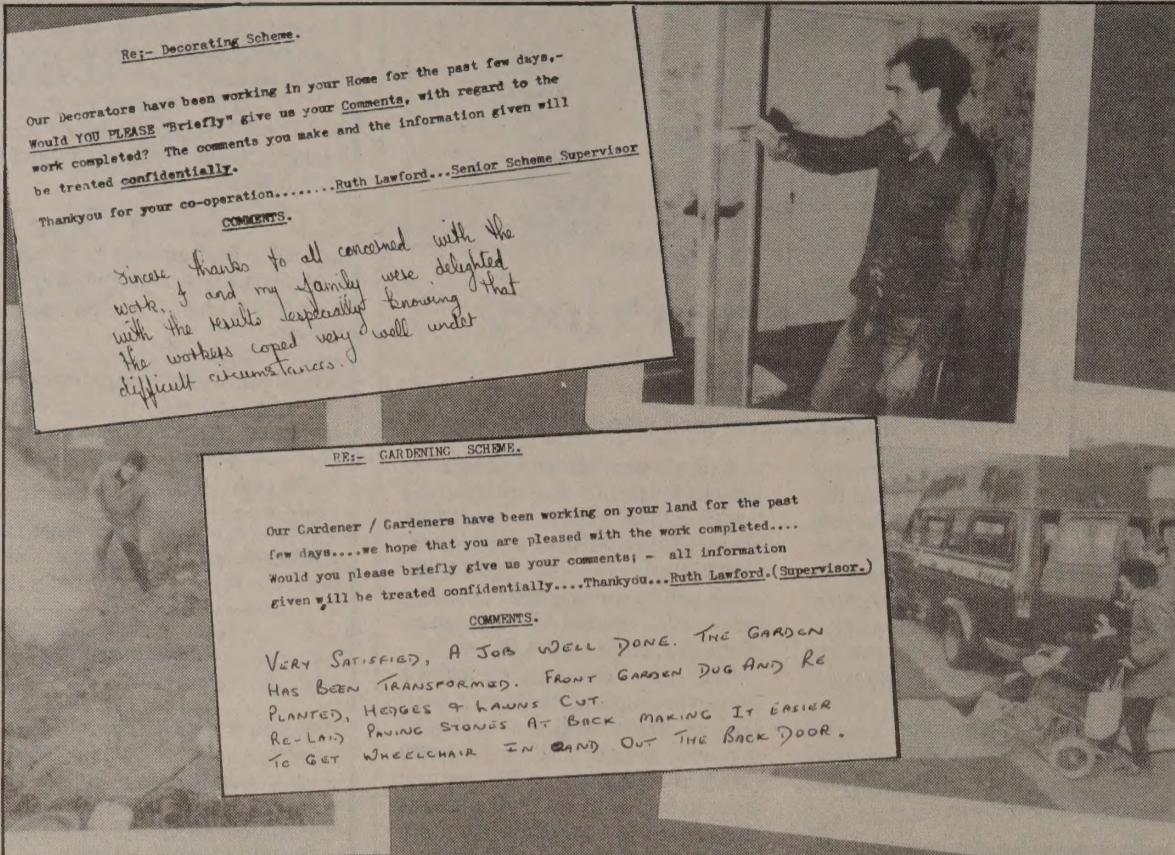
If you live in the South London area and have either had experience of caring for children like Sammy, or believe you have an understanding of their special needs, with the necessary patience, humour, and above all, perseverance, you may be the special person that we are looking for to give Sammy the chance to experience life outside a Childrens' Home.

If you are interested or want further details, please contact:-
Nick Powell, Area 4 Social Services Department,
Kingsbury House, 777 Old Kent Road, London SE15 1NZ.
Telephone: 01-732 8881.

Help where it is needed - in the community

Doug Regan explains what the Cleveland Community Programme Agency does for elderly and disabled people and those who are out of work

Nigel Tuckett



local market for the first time in their lives.

The playscheme was also the training ground for drivers on our Dial-A-Ride pilot scheme for disabled people.

The whole thing was audacious, but it worked.

We obtained four obsolete ambulances from the local health authority and for next to nothing got them back on the road. We also borrowed a vehicle part-time from the Cleveland Spastics Society. We were in business.

Asked when we could start the scheme I said "July". People assumed we meant '84, but we were fully operational in August '83.

Now we are down to 2 vehicles. A Ford Transit presented to us by the inner city of Middlesbrough in April '84 has already covered 56,000 miles, and the one remaining ambulance limps along with only a few months

to live.

Yet we have a crew of 15 offering 600 registered customers a service 7 days a week, from 7.30 am to 11.30 pm. We average 230 journeys a week and are able to carry about 350 disabled people.

Anyone who cannot use public transport is eligible.

Of course we do have people who try to abuse the system. We've had requests for journeys "to collect my bus pass", because "the Jaguar is in for service", and one delightful old dear who on leaving the vehicle gave a cheerful Harvey Smith sign to the driver and then ran up the drive.

All our schemes must have the approval of the unions and in the case of Dial-A-Ride we must guarantee not to do the work of the local ambulance service. So we refuse to enter hospital grounds. When I explained this to one lady, her reply was, "Drop me at the front gate and I'll walk!"

Dial-A-Ride is much more than just transporting people. Our drivers check that front doors and windows are locked, fires safe and the person feels secure and safely settled in the vehicle -

all this to a time schedule.

We have made it possible for an elderly mother and her disabled daughter to meet for the first time in almost a year, even though they live less than a mile apart.

The classic comment on Dial-A-Ride came from a delightful, bemused old lady. "Tell me what happened to the gas lamps," she said.

The agency also runs house decorating and gardening services to those who cannot do the work themselves. Only the team leaders are qualified, but the crews make up in willingness and hard work what they lack in know-how. We have tackled decorating in houses so dirty that private firms would not accept them and in some cases the crews have worked in their own, unpaid, time.

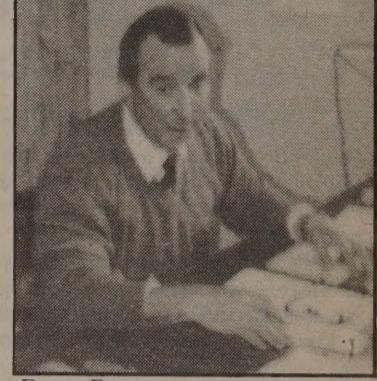
Our gardening scheme concentrates on preparing or converting gardens for disabled people, so that they can keep up an active interest or be taught to maintain the garden when parents or guardians have gone.

At the John Butterwick Trust, a centre for the terminally ill, we

converted derelict gardens into a patio garden and built a wheelchair ramp.

Our gardeners earn plenty of praise for their efforts. But the latest confidential report said something more which caused great hilarity in the office. After congratulating the team on the way they pruned the roses and weeded the concrete path, the customer added, "but they haven't cut the grass." That day there was 4 inches of snow.

At the adult day centre run by the Cleveland Spastics Society, we employ 5 care instructors to help the 50 disabled workers with life skills, like setting a table or eating more adroitly. We also



Doug Regan

try to extend their interests and abilities into areas such as hairdressing or woodwork.

How do we manage to employ and retain such a devoted work force?

It's not the pay - £63 per week is the average wage on the Community Programme.

It is probably a combination of their urge to work (most of them come from the local job centres) and our initial selection, for we must have the right kind of person for this kind of job.

In return, we can give our employees work experience, job satisfaction and a new belief in themselves - that they are employable.

The agency is devoted to "doing". Talking never moved any disabled person from their homes or allowed them the freedom they really deserve.

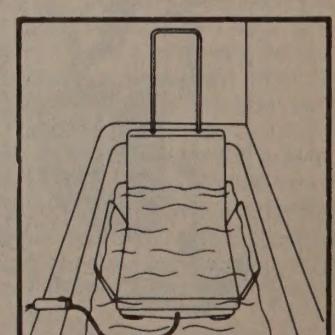
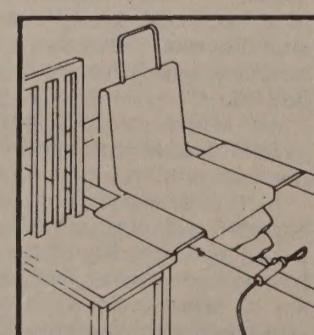
Too often we encounter the waffler, the professional committee person, the whole paper world. We don't need surveys to tell us there is a need. No matter how limited our resources are, we have to act today. Because tomorrow it might be too late.

Doug Regan has been manager of the 50-place Cleveland Community Programme Agency based in Middlesbrough for the last 2 years.

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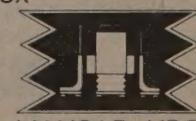
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Face to face in Mexico

Children, parents, professionals, the public, TV and the press – CPO's team encountered the lot on their 3-week trip in January and February. Derek Lancaster-Gaye reports.

In the Spring of last year the Mexican cp organisation, Asociacion pro Paralitico Cerebral, approached Cerebral Palsy Overseas for help. It was not about finance they wished to have advice but rather about the level of staff knowledge and understanding of cerebral palsy.

Virtually no facilities exist in Mexico for staff training in this field and professional and official awareness of the condition is of a low order, seemingly exceeded only by the apathy and ignorance of members of the public.

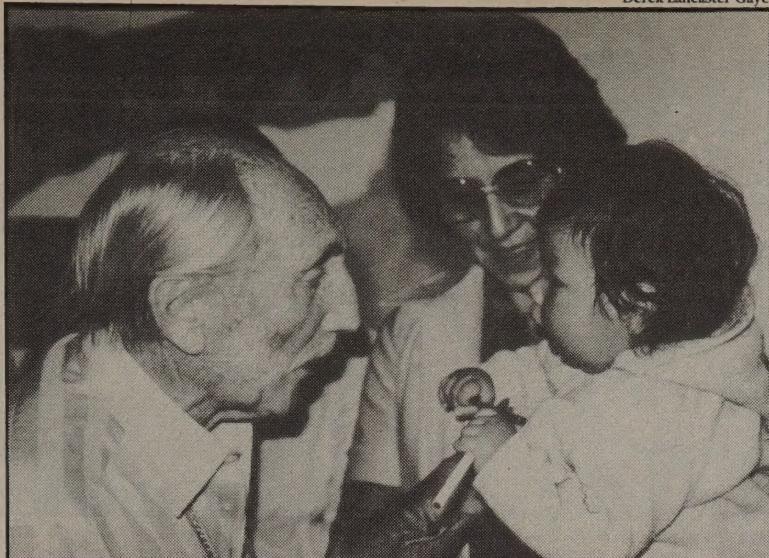
From my 2 exploratory visits it was evident that this project should be devoted to staff training, image building and parent rallying.

APAC is a national organisation based in Mexico City (population 18 million). It does not have the regional organisation nor financial backing necessary to support services elsewhere in Mexico.

First it would be necessary to draw the public's attention to the problem and to assess the extent of the problem by speaking with parents – not so easy to organise when there is little to offer the parent.

I had always assumed that a rather scientific approach was required in the selection of a group of professionals who would not only work together, but do so many thousands of miles away from home. Agreement in the UK was one thing, but would they all agree at the other end in the face of a little adversity? David Morris (paediatrician), Dorothy Seglow (physiotherapist), Carol Myer (educationalist), Janet Carr (psychologist), Sheena Wickings (OT) and Kennett Westmacott, whose aids workshops will long be remembered in Mexico as much for their over-subscription as for their meaningful end products – these were the members of the team, invited more on the basis of friendship and their wealth of skill and knowledge. But it worked.

The team had a slightly schizophrenic programme, dividing their time between APAC and FREM, the Mexican foundation concerned with mental handicap. For FREM we were in the psychiatric hospitals training



APAC mother and baby meet paediatric neurologist, Dr David Morris.

"volunteers" to work with patients, and nursing staff to work with "volunteers".

The psychiatric service, like so many official services the world over, had its political undertones. Staff talked of "friend" and "enemy" amongst professional colleagues, yet we sensed that much of this type of problem stemmed from ignorance or lack of special skill in the field of mental disability.

Surprisingly, members of the team did not complain of over-work in spite of the extensive travelling they were required to undertake if they were to give seminars and talk and work with parents and professionals in cities such as Monterrey, Guadalajara and Aguascalientes. As David Morris put it, "Just so long

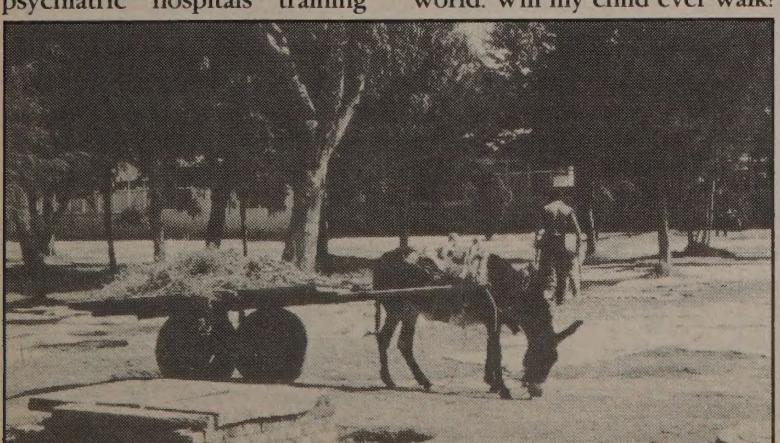


Handing on the knowledge – Carol Myer of White Lodge Centre with a cp child.

as you don't stop, your energy continues to meet the demands made upon it by these quite remarkable people".

None of us could help but be impressed by the earnestness and enthusiasm of the APAC parents. For many, the parents' seminar was the first opportunity they had ever had of discussing their own child's problems, and over 200 anxious parents besieged one of the APAC's centres one Sunday morning to join in the great debate about the future.

The questions were predictable, as they are all over the world. Will my child ever walk?



Laundry drying in the sun while donkey-transport waits patiently at the Jose Sayago Psychiatric Hospital in Mexico City.

Derek Lancaster-Gaye

Money for jam, but not for bread and butter

Derek Lancaster-Gaye, director of Cerebral Palsy Overseas, explains the financial problems that beset new charities

According to a recent report in *The Guardian*, a newly formed charity, Aged in Distress, is having to explain to the Charity Commission the apparent imbalance between the funds it raises and the sums it pays out to its clients – elderly people in distress.

Apparently it is their first year in business, a year in which they are required to establish their presence on the charitable scene. Contracts have to be made, potential donors alerted to their aims and objectives and funds raised to undertake the very purposes for which they came into existence.

Unless a new charity is fortunate to have a ready made and immediately identifiable group of supporters, the organisation will have to put together a package designed to attract support from people it has yet to identify.

It seems to me quite understandable that the balance between income and expenditure in the early years is unlikely to reflect the normal level of organisational costs an efficient charity is expected to achieve. To raise money in such a highly competitive arena requires a disproportionately higher expenditure in the first year or two.

It is not surprising that donors are reluctant to meet these costs, preferring to see their donations allocated directly to the purpose for which they were given.

We are experiencing precisely these problems at CPO.

We have been fortunate in being able to identify a number of projects quite early and our appeals, therefore, have been aimed at projects rather than at raising funds to meet central costs. But we still have a major problem of central financing.

Like Aged in Distress, we have had to establish ourselves, but in the international arena where operational costs like telephone, postage and travel are much higher.

In theory, an international organisation has an international group of supporters. The view

prevails here that CPO should raise the major part of its funds overseas where all its projects are carried out. A reasonable view in many respects, but one which is countered overseas by the view that since we are based in the UK, we should raise most of our funds here. So we find ourselves in "no man's land."

Furthermore, most of the countries in which we undertake projects are developing countries whose people are unlikely to be able to respond to appeals for financial support.

In the long term, the picture should improve, provided that our projects are soundly financed and can contribute to the central costs essential for developing the projects. Thus the more projects undertaken by CPO and the more successful they are, the more likely we are to survive in an area of activity that is notoriously underfunded.

We now have some 30 projects around the world planned for the next 2 or 3 years. Three have been completed and are producing the success stories essential for good fundraising.

But project income alone will never support the central costs of a small organisation such as ours and the difficulties of raising money, and the costs of doing so in the early stages will remain with us for some time.

Cash flow – a reasonable balance between the rate at which income comes in to meet planned expenditure – is probably the most difficult problem for new organisations with no capital investment.

Project work demands commitment. Funds have to be spent within a fixed period on a project that may have taken many months to set up. Yet it is difficult, if not impossible, to control the rate at which income flows in from fundraising events, especially if it comes from appeals to trusts and industry and from mailing shots.

The line between success and insolvency can be a very fine one.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION COURSES & ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Churchtown Farm is a Spastics Society Centre.

THIS WINTER AND SPRING



All levels of ability and degree of handicap catered for in winter and summer. From £68.00 per 7 night week at a purpose built centre offering full central heating, heated pool, excellent food and accommodation. Activities include sailing, riding, rock-climbing, canoeing, swimming, camping, bird watching, natural history, photography, painting, pottery etc.

Brochure available from The Principal, Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall.

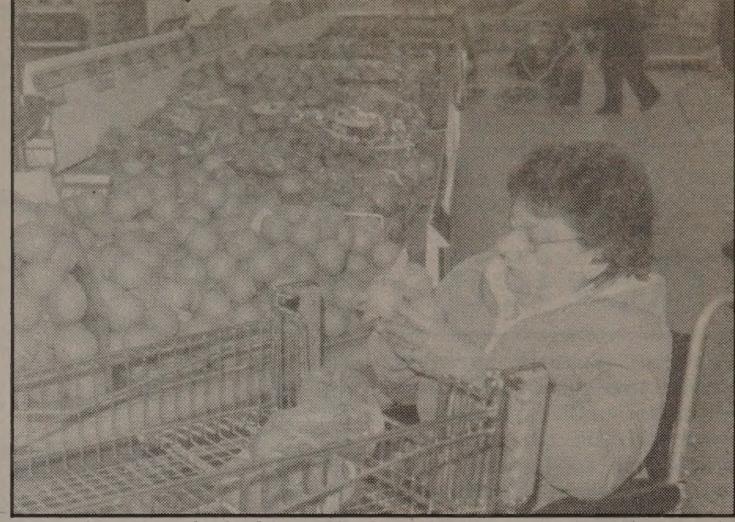
Simon Crompton



In the multi-storey car park, transferring from invalid car to wheelchair...



... in Tesco, technicians examine the problem of attaching the special trolley to wheelchair...



... choosing fruit from displays at a convenient height for wheelchair users...

The experiences of a wheelchair shopper

Joyce Vaughan takes a trip to Tesco in South Tottenham to try out their new trolley, and gives her views on shopping

I am luckier than a lot of disabled people in that most of the time I can get to the shops.

I have an invalid car and a manual wheelchair which I use in the winter.

I also have an electric wheelchair which I much prefer because – theoretically – it gives me complete freedom and independence. I use it whenever the weather permits and I am lucky enough to live within walking distance of our High Street where there is a marvellous market.

You have to be a pretty good driver and keep your wits about you, especially since the market is so packed at the weekends and people in front of you tend to stop dead suddenly to look at something.

Still, I haven't hit anyone yet. If they walk into me and it's their fault I don't apologise.

I buy most of my clothes from the market, because you get personal service which you don't get in the larger stores. Stallholders lift the clothes off the rack and show them to me, and usually let me take them home to try them on.

What are the snags and problems of wheelchair shopping? First of all, of course, access. Most big stores and supermarkets are designed on the level, but even one step presents difficulties in the manual wheelchair and in the electric one two steps makes access impossible.

Given that I can get into – let's say – a supermarket, the next hurdle is to reach things on the high shelves.

Most of the time I try not to want things that are out of reach, but if I absolutely must, I simply ask someone to get it for me. Usually they are most willing and happy to help.

All this time I am balancing a basket on my lap. In the electric wheelchair this isn't too difficult as I only need one hand to drive it. But when using the manual wheelchair it is a question of balancing the basket while pushing the chair. I must admit that I have lost it completely more than once as I don't have a very big lap.

Over the years I have developed a special manner for dealing with this situation. I sit, calm and detached, while kind

people scrabble about picking things up for me. I have found that people are not embarrassed for you if you are not.

I recently tried out a new trolley for people in wheelchairs which has been introduced into the larger Tesco stores. Although I was worried about its size and weight when I first saw it, it proved to be very manoeuvrable and made things a lot easier.

I would have preferred the basket to be lower, and when I turned a corner the trolley tended to swing in the other direction. This was partly because it had been designed for a wider wheelchair than mine, and partly because the elastic attachments seemed rather vulnerable – one of mine had been broken and hastily repaired by a Tesco maintenance man.

I also tested the Mecanoids Folding Helping Hand, a pincer device to help people in wheelchairs pick up things normally outside their reach. Although it is possibly fine for picking up light items like packets of soup, when I tried to lift a can of meat from a top shelf it collapsed.

The checkout at a supermarket has never been a problem with my manual wheelchair. But imagine my dismay when I found that my brand new electric wheelchair, being that much wider, wouldn't go through most checkouts. This meant scattering the queue behind me as I backed out after paying, encountering varying degrees of kindness or irritability.

I am pleased to say that most of the bigger, newer supermarkets now have a special checkout for wheelchair users. So it was annoying to find at the beginning of last winter, when our brand new Sainsbury's opened, with 27 checkouts, that the only checkout closed was the one for wheelchairs.

On enquiring of the manager why this was so, he informed me it was the nearest checkout to the door and the girls had complained about the cold.

I asked him to have this pointed out to the architect for the future. I don't know what happened, but since then that checkout has never been closed.

Recently, I spent a day at the sparkling new shopping city at Wood Green in North London. A heaven for disabled shoppers you might think, and certainly there were easy, self-opening lifts to each floor and beautifully fitted toilets.

But inside the biggest Boots I have ever seen I found that the cassettes I wanted were upstairs.

At least Boots was aware of a

problem, because there was a small notice saying "Help available for disabled. Ask the assistant."

After finding an assistant – not always easy in a store these days – I found the help consisted of being taken behind the scenes to a goods lift loaded with trolleys. Embarrassment all round while these were unloaded, and a stony silence from the assistant while she took us up. The reverse process happened when we wanted to come down.

The same thing was necessary in British Home Stores.

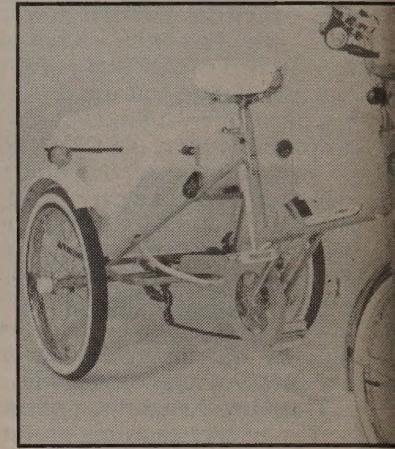
As this is a modern shopping city, why couldn't a small, self-operating lift have been installed beside the goods lift? Having to search for and ask for assistance completely takes away the independence we are striving for.

It was even worse in W.H. Smith – again the biggest I have ever seen. The ground floor area was vast but to get to it from the small area inside the door you had to climb 4 steps. My brother left me at the bottom while he did some shopping for me. Once again, a loss of independence.

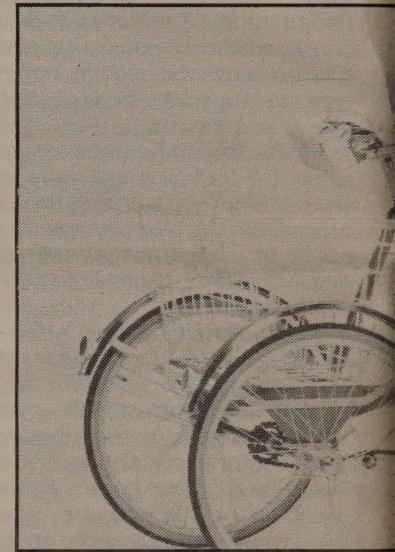
Eventually a young male assistant did come and ask if I needed help and said there was a lift behind the scenes... By this time we were fed up with that so we gave it a miss. W.H. Smith is my favourite shop too – all those lovely books and cassettes.

I hope that all this doesn't seem too much of a gripe because things are much better than they used to be and getting better all the time. I can think back to the days when I was first married, before the days of supermarkets, when my only means of shopping was to sit outside the corner shop in my trike and wait for the owner to come out and serve me. (Why did all those old fashioned corner shops have 3 or 4 beautifully curved steps?)

The point I am really making is: what is the use of such marvellous services as the Dial-A-Ride which took us to Wood Green, and paying for these very expensive electric wheelchairs, if you are then excluded or restricted by bad planning? Is it lack of care and interest in the problems?



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The Sholley is a large capacity, easy to handle trolley and is a useful aid to walking. Folds flat when not in use and can be hung on a supermarket cart. £29.95 (plus £2.50 p&p) from Sholleys Ltd, 73-75 Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea.

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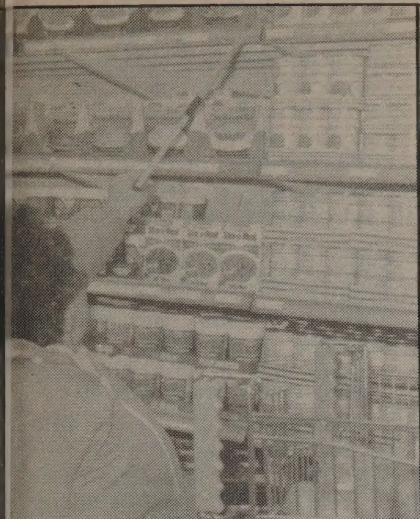
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for tins with the Mecanaid's Helping Hand before it folded instantaneously...



... paying at the extra-wide check-out for disabled customers presented no problems...



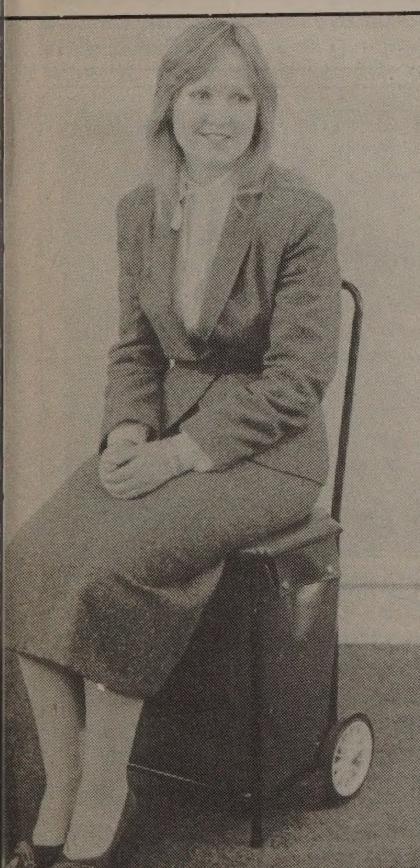
... but packing items from a high-walled collecting point did.



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f gears and a special locking parking gear for your shopping. Price from £233.91 Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9NL. The



upper shopping trolley incorporates a seat you can rest during shopping trips. (plus VAT & carriage) from Small Aids Ltd Place, High Street, Barnet, Herts.

Help for the customer in the right places

Kathy Johnson checks up on department stores, shopping centres and services for disabled people

Marks & Spencer

Access: depends on the design and location of an individual store, but trying to improve. Access is taken into consideration when planning major developments or new stores: ramps, electric doors and customer lifts. Every store has a goods lift which can be used if need be. Christmas shopping evenings for disabled people. **Staff:** trained to be aware of people who may need help. Stores display Sympathetic Hearing signs. **Information:** contact local store or Customer Liaison at head office, tel: 01-935 4422.

J. Sainsbury

Access: similar attitude to M & S. Has introduced trolleys for wheelchair users in a number of stores. Check-outs for disabled shoppers in the newer stores. **Staff:** trained to be aware of those who would like help. Will help individual shoppers in slack periods if given notice. **Information:** contact individual store or Customer Relations at head office, tel: 01-921 6000.

John Lewis Partnership

Access: taken into account in design and lay-out of newer stores. So, of 21 department stores, most are accessible to wheelchairs and half of them have disabled loos. All 77 Waitrose supermarkets have a trolley for wheelchair users and a special check-out. Some of their car parks have spaces for disabled customers. **Information:** contact local store or head office, tel: 01-637 3434

F.W. Woolworth

Access: again depends on the particular size. Wheelchair users are welcome to use service lifts and



The Lightweight Rest-Seat unfolds from a walking stick to provide a seat. £28.50 (plus VAT) from J & A Carters Ltd, Alfred Street, Westbury Wilts BA13 3DZ.

loos.

Information: contact local store or head office, tel: 01-262 1222.

Boots

Access: provision taken into account as far as possible, especially in new stores.

Staff: emphasis on training staff to be aware of when help may be needed.

Information: contact local store or head office, tel: (0602) 506111.

W.H. Smith

Access: again depends on the structure of the building. New shops provided with ramps and wider doors. Many stores are too small to make major changes, e.g. install lifts.

Do-It-All diy stores are all on one level.

Information: contact local store or head office, tel: 01-353 0277.

British Home Stores

Access: similar reaction to other stores. Goods lift, if necessary. Special shopping evenings at Christmas.

Information: check with individual store or head office, tel: 01-262 3288

Mothercare

Access: huge doors on all stores, some of them automatic. Goods lift can be used if there are different levels, and staff loos if necessary.

Staff: there is a high percentage of staff to customers and great emphasis is placed on customer service and individual attention.

Information: individual store, or contact head office, tel: (0923) 33577.

Tesco

Access: provision for disabled people in all new stores and car parking facilities too. Stores with restaurants have loos for disabled people. Customer lifts are available if there is more than one level. Disabled check-outs wherever possible. New stores have at least 2.

From June, Midland banks will be opening in 3 Tesco super stores - Brent Park at Neasden, Beaumont Leys in Leicester, and Bursledon Towers in Southampton. Opening hours will be the same as the stores, and most services including banks will be available.

Staff: policy to make disabled customers welcome. Happy to help.

Information: contact local store or head office, tel: (97) 32222.

C & A

Access: taken into account with design of new stores. Customer

lifts provided in most stores.

Goods lift if necessary. Certain areas have special shopping evenings at Christmas.

Staff: trained to be aware of people who may need help.

Information: individual store, or contact head office, tel: 01-629 1244.

Shopmobility

Peterborough: Level 11, Car park, Queensgate Centre, Peterborough. Tel: (0733) 313133. 25 wheelchairs and 13 electric wheelchairs available, free, as part of the Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service. Phone to ensure chair is available. You must complete a form. Collection from bus station possible.

Cardiff: Shopmobility Centre, Ground Floor, Oxford Arcade Multi-Storey Car Park, Bridge Street, Cardiff. Tel: (0222) 399355. 10 manual wheelchairs (one for a child), 7 electric wheelchairs, 3 scooters for use anywhere in the Cardiff shopping centre. Phone, book in (providing positive identification the first time) and complete form. The £2.50 deposit is returnable. Helpers sometimes available but you need to ask.

Central Milton Keynes: Shopmobility, Shopping Information, Midsummer Arcade, Central Milton Keynes. Tel: (0908) 670866. Situated close to main disabled parking area. Centre is completely level. 25 manual wheelchairs (numbers ever increasing!), 13 electric wheelchairs. Phone to ensure that a chair is available, book in (providing proof of identity and £2.00 deposit) and borrow chair, for as long as you need it. No volunteer pushers.

Bristol Shopping with Confidence scheme involves all the major stores in bringing help and advice to the public's attention, including facilities for disabled people.

Dial-A-Ride Schemes

National Advisory Unit for Community Transport, Keymer Street, Beswick, Manchester M11 3FY. Tel: (061) 273 6038. Can offer information on country-wide schemes.

Federation of London Dial-a-Rides, St. Margaret's, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD. Tel: 01-482 2325. Can offer info on 33 London schemes.

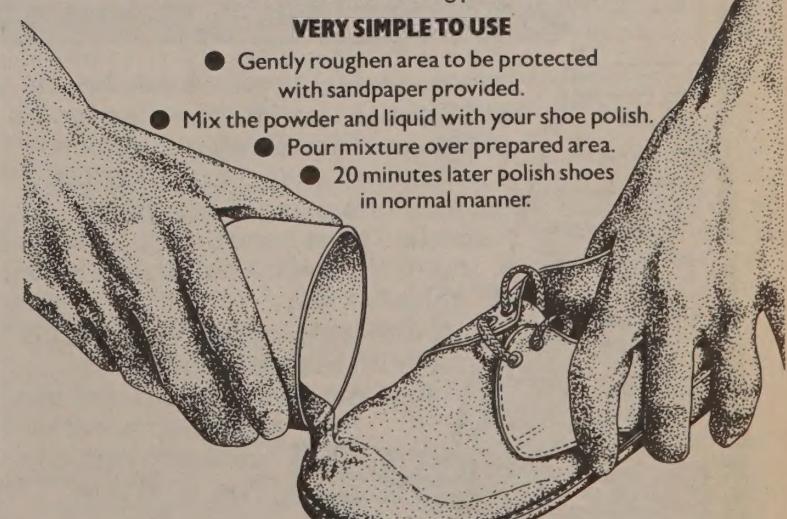
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OUTLOOK

Books

Doran: Child of Courage

by Linda Scotson
(Collins, £8.95)

This book is a mother's account of her handicapped son's first 6 years of life.

Doran had a very dramatic start, with a rare blood group incompatibility and kidney failure which needed several blood transfusions. He survived, but seemed to be blind and deaf. By 9 months he was described as almost helpless, with little control of his movements. Apparently he was suffering from "brain damage".

His mother, whilst full of praise for the skills of the medical and nursing professions which saved Doran's life several times, was desperately dissatisfied about the quality and quantity of treatment offered to "cure" his condition. She refused to accept either conventional methods, gloomy predictions about Doran's future, or a "wait and see" attitude.

Her deep-rooted belief that intensive stimulation of Doran's movements, vision, hearing and language would normalize him found nourishment in the works of Glenn Doman at the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential, Philadelphia, which they first visited when Doran was 18 months old.

The next 4½ years were completely devoted to the Institute's intensive day-in, day-out programmes, aimed at massive stimulation of the brain.

By age 5, Doran was able to walk and run and turn somersaults, to read words aloud, write a little and count. The psychologist in his area considered his IQ score to be above average and that normal schooling could be recommended (although his speech is still limited, apparently held up by his respiratory problems).

This sounds like a remarkable success story. Should we celebrate with Mrs Scotson and Doran?

Is it worth going to Philadelphia?

An educational psychologist and a paediatrician give their opinion



Doran and his mother, Linda Scotson.

I do not think so. There is a strong possibility that her fine feelings have clouded her judgement.

Doran is making wonderful progress – but not necessarily because of the Doman programme.

All children make progress: they are born that way, with potential for development. "Brain damage" slows up this progress, but very rarely prevents it altogether.

Doran was making progress, such as in his vision and hearing responses, months before he went to Philadelphia, and it is very likely that he would have continued to do so, irrespective of Doman's intensive treatment.

Doman's ideas – for example that pumping in huge amounts of information will cause the brain to grow – are unconvincing.

Even if we ignore the theories and the techniques and look at the results, there is no independently published evidence over the last 30 years to show that the Institutes' results are any better than those obtained by conventional (and much less gruelling) treatment.

The Spastics Society knows of many families who have become

disillusioned.

Mrs Scotson regards Doran as a "symbol of hope" for all parents of handicapped children. Of course, everyone is entitled to hope for a miracle, but it is wrong to expect one.

I suggest that her very moving book is read with caution.

Leslie Gardner
Principal Psychologist,
The Spastics Society

It is very difficult for someone who has been a paediatrician for 25 years and has seen a relatively large number of children to review a book about one handicapped child who has made tremendous progress because of all the things, according to his mother, that she and others have done for him.

If I am cynical about it, I can be castigated for failing to recognise the tremendous labour Mrs Scotson has put into her role with Doran.

Yet reading this book I cannot escape a slight feeling of *deja vu* and, indeed, regret that the progress in the treatment of handicapped children has developed so slowly.

The Institutes for Achievement of Human Potential have been active for many years and I notice that the first critical comment I read about them was published in 1968.

At that time, the management of handicap was dominated by several schools of therapy.

Different groups of therapists had developed different ways of treating children with cerebral palsy and other physical handicaps and believed that *their* treatment method was the only appropriate one.

Probably the techniques of the Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential attracted the most criticism.

The three most fundamental criticisms were, and are, that the group's ideas of child development were simply wrong; that the course of therapy placed undue stress on the family of the handicapped child; and that there is no real evidence that it is effective.

I always found the Institutes' ideas a little barmy, and this still seems to be the case: (p. 131) "... it became very clear that crawling was vital for intellectual and physical growth..." This is simply untrue. 5 per cent to 10 per cent of babies never crawl – they move elegantly in what is known as "bottom shuffling" – while others never crawl but simply stand up and walk.

Another point: Mrs Scotson says that Doran's head was growing at 400 per cent. What can this mean? Was he developing hydrocephalus?

The second issue is whether the programme unduly interferes with the parents' lives. Mrs Scotson freely admits that it does. Apart from having her house full of ladders at one point,

she is unable to do anything else, knows nothing about what goes on in the world ("Linda, do you ever read the newspaper, or listen to the radio?" Answer: "No") and does not even have time to comb her hair. In the end, her elder daughter, although very fond of her mother and Doran, elects to live with her grandparents and go to school somewhere else.

Thirdly, would Doran have achieved what he has achieved without this intense programme?

Alas, no-one will ever be able to prove anything about that.

Although they are late at walking and often fall about, many athetoid children walk eventually, and I believe most of the physiotherapist's role is to prevent the abnormal movements and potential deformities developing while the child matures.

Although I would be concerned that speech and language therapy started early I would not be too keen for flash cards to be shown at an early age, as the Institutes do. I would prefer to start with orthodox speech therapy. I would not be happy either with the re-breathing exercises through a plastic mask that Doran carries out.

What could a modern centre have done for someone like Doran? I would hope that doctors and therapists would have moved step by step along an aim-oriented treatment programme, not using one of these biblical methods of treatment, but being aware of all the different techniques that have been developed, and selecting those most appropriate for the child at particular ages.

Then I would like to have done something so that Doran could be brought up in a home where other family members, while participating in Doran's life, lived their own lives fully.

A modern country ought to provide good health and social services, free, for children who have had some brain injury. Alas, these simple, reasonable and adequate services are still not available in many parts of the country.

Parents have to battle to get the best for their children. But I honestly believe they can achieve this better by staying at home than by flying off to Philadelphia.

Dr Martin Bax
Spastics International Medical Publications

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Since opening in 1978 The Spastics Society's Dene College has been recognised as a pioneer in this field of education. It offers a two year course with a varied and practical curriculum consisting of social and general education, computing and technology, music and drama, art and craft and rural science. Students are encouraged to face "growing up" in five main areas: privacy, sexuality, financial independence, using information, and decision making.

20 new students can be accommodated each year,



and applications are now open for the next college year beginning in September. Preference is given to applications from young people with cerebral palsy, but students with other disabilities will also be considered.

For further information and applications contact:

The College Liaison and Placement Officer
Dene College, Shipbourne Rd, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9NT.

OUTLOOK

Dance

Silence

The persecution of the first Japanese Christians, the struggle for individual faith and against isolation might sound dry stuff for a dance drama.

But Amici's adaptation of Shusaku Endo's novel, *Silence*, is a production which defies expectations. The company's imagination and sheer energy make for an exciting evening.

Amici describe themselves as an "Integrated Dance Theatre Company", and in *Silence* "integration" really is a key word. Not only are actors/dancers with mental and visual disabilities put centre-stage and given a chance to use and display their abilities alongside able-bodied actors/dancers, but also the strength and character of the production derives from the support and sharing amongst the cast, a sense of collective identity which corresponds beautifully to the drama's themes.

This characteristic gives rise to several arresting tableaux. Kichijiro, who smuggles priests into the country, is hailed as a hero by the local Christians. They process behind him in rows, bound together with their arms, swinging him forwards and backwards as they all bow and arch back, weaving around the stage like a splendid animal. As Ferreira tells the central character, the priest Rodrigues, "It is easy to walk proud and tall when you have support."

Towards the end of the drama there is another procession, a joyful dancing and singing through the streets with lanterns as Rodrigues is led to his trial. There is a violent shift of tone as the revelry turns to overt hostility. The people gather behind

the splendidly sinister samurai, who wield crossed bamboo sticks and walk like deadly mechanical toys.

In a scene of group menace they repeatedly charge and retreat from the cowering Rodrigues to the accompaniment of deafening drums.

At every turn the lighting, costume, make-up and Daniel Kingshill's music strongly backs up Wolfgang Stange's imaginative choreography and direction.

Amici is Stange's creation. Trained as a dancer at the London School of Contemporary Dance, he has taught dance and creative movement to groups of mentally handicapped people, physically disabled people and psychiatric patients since 1976. He has already mounted 4 productions using disabled and able-bodied students. The last, *Ruckblick*, which like *Silence* employed students from the Strathcona Education Centre, was well received and played to packed houses.

Silence is a worthy successor. Pius Hickey gives a thoughtful

characterisation of the apostate Kichijiro and Reynard Gayle dances with grace and sensitivity as Rodrigues.

Although the pace slackens at the start of the second half when the play gets rather bogged down in its own symbolism, the images of isolation and of a web of bonds which are the strength and destruction of a community are thoroughly engrossing. These images, says Wolfgang Stange in his proposal for *Silence*, relate to the experience of many of his students.

"Endo questions society's ideas of who and what is weak and explores the overall struggle of mankind against isolation. This production is dedicated to all who have experienced the loneliness of silence."

Simon Crompton

For information on Amici and future performances of Silence contact Wolfgang Stange, 68 Barons Court Road, London W14 9DU, tel: 01-385 1327. Or telephone Ann Ballard on 01-692 7339.

K. Heatherley



Inoue the magistrate, played by Jim Lincoln, with some of his samurai.

variety of roles with considerable versatility, enthusiasm and wit.

The story itself concerns Kevin (Michael Mole), a young "Jack the lad", who is permanently paralysed in a car accident.

The play records his gradual rehabilitation as he struggles to come to terms with his new situation.

He receives considerable encouragement from an elderly disabled couple at the local day centre, but is constantly handicapped by the refusal of the able bodied people around him to accept his aspirations – "you've got to be realistic . . .", they say.

Kevin's own view of what is realistic for him is, not surprisingly, entirely different and is based on his assertion that "I'm a person just the same as you."

Generally this message is well expressed by the play.

The ending, however, is disappointing as it fails to draw the clear conclusions that the wealth of research deserves and demands.

Kevin – the character with whom the audience most readily identifies – develops admirable resolve and understanding for people with acquired disabilities. But there is no real evidence to suggest that his views towards people with other disabilities – like cerebral palsy – have become any less unenlightened than earlier, when he referred to people with epilepsy as "nutties" and was reluctant to "mix with cripples".

This flaw in the piece was emphasised by the teenage audience's post performance ques-

tions, the most common of which was "can you do your spastic impersonation?"

Overall, however, this project – which includes a comprehensive pack of teacher's notes – should be welcomed for at least sowing the seeds of awareness of disability and its handicaps in young people's minds.

As for the reaping – that surely is the responsibility of organisations like The Spastics Society. And, in Surrey at any rate, the time has never been riper . . .

Alan Durant
Publicity and Film Officer
The Thorndike Young People's Theatre, Leatherhead, Surrey.
Tel: (0372) 377677.

Books

Directory for Disabled People 1985

compiled by Ann Darnbrough & Derek Kinrade
(Published in association with RADAR, available from Woodhead-Faulkner Ltd, Fitzwilliam House, 32 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QY, £11.50.)

Where other books suggest ways of solving a problem and suggest equipment and assistance that may be useful, this book gives you the wherewithal to do it.

The updated edition of *Directory for the Disabled* guides you to the person, organisation or book which will best answer your questions or provide practical assistance, whether you want to know about education

Motoring

The Renault Traffic – a serious contender

Pressures from disablement associations and changes in attitude over the application of MSC funds have resulted in a large increase in the number of Dial-A-Ride vehicles on the road.

One of the newest Dial-A-Rides, in the London Borough of Enfield, uses the Renault Traffic, *Transport Magazine's "Van of the Year 1984"*. Reports so far indicate that it is ideal for the job.

The low floor level allows a folding ramp to be used for loading wheelchairs rather than an expensive and possibly dangerous hydraulic tail lift.

The high roof gives more than enough head room, and with a side door as part of the standard design there is no need for any structural changes to comply with the new regulations for this type of vehicle.

Renault have been a serious contender for this type of van for some years and the permutations of wheelbase, door layout and engine size are almost endless. A van to suit a particular requirement can be ordered direct from the factory in France at a much lower cost than a comparable British van.

The conversion, however, is always cheaper and best done in Britain. For Dial-A-Ride it is just a matter of getting space for as many wheelchairs as possible and meeting the basic Government requirements so as to take advantage of the tax concessions for an ambulance.

In my opinion, centres or groups who need to run an ambulance should have the best possible standard of conversion and sound-proofing they can afford. After all, the Renault is

designed to last at least 100,000 miles which in many cases could be 10 years.

My test vehicle was the long-wheelbase Traffic with a 1600 cc engine, 5 gears and a Dial-A-Ride conversion taking up to 3 wheelchairs and 6 seated passengers.

The sloping front combined with the high driving seat gives a much better all round visibility than most vans in this class and makes parking much easier.

I found it particularly easy to drive in town, with steering as light as a normal family car, despite the front wheel drive, and effortless gear changing. The controls came easily to hand and the 1600 cc engine accelerated smoothly and gave a comfortable cruising speed. The 5th gear was useful on motorways.

Many more women are now driving this type of van and the Traffic is probably ideal both for size and ease of handling, with no tail lift to wrestle with.

Buying this type of vehicle is a major investment for most organisations. Renault has an advantage in that it offers a programme of help and advice for disabled motorists which covers the conversion of ambulances.

Renault can put you in touch with a coach builder who is experienced in converting Renault vans and informed about the regulations for this type of use. You can also get advice on the most economical model in the range so that van and conversion exactly meet your requirements.

Technical information

1647 cc engine, with front-wheel drive and a 5-speed gearbox, delivering 64 bHP. Uses 2-star petrol. Fuel consumption figures not available.

Price

It is difficult to price a particular conversion but a basic crew bus would be: 13-seat short wheelbase £5,581.45 15-seat long wheelbase £5,951.95 (excluding VAT)

John Byworth

More details available from Keith Baker, Special Sales Coordinator, Renault UK Ltd, Western Avenue, London W2 0RZ, tel: 01-992 3481



The Renault Traffic with folding ramp down.

or employment, holidays or housing adaptations, personal relationships or mobility.

All the vital information that is difficult to find anywhere else is there, like the rules on relief from VAT or parents' rights regarding assessment of educational needs.

Each chapter follows a similar sequence – overview of the topic, followed by details of legislation, statutory services, financial assistance, organisations, books and films.

Organisations are not just listed, but are described in enough detail so that you can decide for yourself which will be the most relevant. (However, addresses should be checked in a yearly directory.)

One chapter provides a summary and interpretation of the legislation affecting disabled people. It enables a person to "ascertain the extent to which

benefits and services should be available" and to "secure those benefits and services to which he is entitled."

Indirectly, the book makes a statement about the country's attitude towards disability as reflected in the provision of services.

Cross-referencing is very good. Besides listings under topics, organisations are also listed alphabetically. There is also an index which will send you straight to the answer – though you may be drawn into reading other sections along the way and acquiring far more information than you set out to find!

An invaluable book for those giving or needing information, which provides a tremendous amount of detail in a very clear and readable form.

Janet Ciddor
Occupation Therapist

"If I can do it, anyone can!"

Carole Smith believes that her experiences of working in the "ordinary" world may encourage others

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to write books. This may sound very strange in my position because I suffer from hydrocephalus and have never been to school.

I grew up in a small village miles from anywhere – Swansea was our nearest town – and would never in a million years have thought of going out to work, but my mother suddenly decided she wanted to buy a general store in the seaside village of Mumbles.

It was the opportunity I had been waiting for. I could not serve, having difficulty with the adding up, but I could fill stands with bottles of lemonade, sweets, etc.

Some years later my mother's health began to give out and we sold up. The first few months were like paradise. We bought a brand new house on an estate with an all-embracing view of Swansea Bay.

But gradually I began to make myself feel ill – I don't know how, but I am sure I just did. I was missing all the company of the shop and the lovely feeling of being a useful member of society.

I began developing mysterious pains in the chest and armpits and suffered terribly from insomnia.

I saw the consultant who told me the bitter truth – there was nothing physically wrong with me. I just did not have enough to think about. I was bored.

He was the first person to

VIEWPOINT



Carole Smith

suggest that I should look for a job. This was quite radical thinking to me. My parents out of love for me had always tried to protect me from the outside world and were made very anxious by this suggestion. However, I knew that this was what I really wanted to do. The medical social worker suggested that I should start by trying something like washing dishes in a local restaurant.

While she was trying to arrange this I did part time voluntary work in a local children's home.

Finally I got the call from Woolworths and started in the catering department washing pots and pans and doing various other kitchen work.

I felt this was really plunging in at the deep end as the work was very tiring, being on my feet all day and, naturally, no one made any allowances for my handicap, which is just as it should be.

I reasoned that if I wanted to be treated like everyone else and have a job I could not expect to play up my handicap when it suited me. However, people did stare at me a lot as mine is a very visual handicap. Hard though it was, I just had to learn to accept this and all my workmates got used to me in the end.

I had been there for about 3 years when a kind uncle found me a vacancy in a hotel right in the village where we lived. This was ideal as I could now walk to work and did not have to rely on

other people to give me lifts.

The following 5 years were the happiest I have ever spent. These were the dazzling years before the oil crisis and the recession; business was booming and there was plenty of work.

When the recession finally hit, the hotel got into serious financial difficulties and I was often laid off so that I had to rely on social security for half of the year. This was a great blow to my pride as I had got used to working and I began to feel depressed again.

Fortunately, thanks to a disablement resettlement officer, I was offered a place on a rehabilitation course.

The first day I was very apprehensive, and was started on dismantling cartridges.

When I had become adept at this I was shown how to make toy trucks and then I was put on to soldering. I regret to say that I was my tutor's despair at soldering. Finally they put me in the cookhouse and declared I was a born caterer!

When I finished my course they sent me on a job rehearsal which is an opportunity for you to try the employer and for the employer to try you.

I was sent to a popular pub in our locality and was very lucky to be offered a permanent job.

I have been there for nearly 2 years and enjoy the variety of work: preparing food, clearing tables, working in the still room, and using the wonderful dishwasher.

Twenty years ago I would never have believed that I could hold down a job in the "ordinary" world. I thought it was my fate to stay at home or at the very best to work in a sheltered environment.

It is wonderful for me to feel "normal", and it is useful for the general public to get to know handicapped people better: to know that we are just the same as everyone else even if we do look or sound a little different.

I would like to encourage your readers to have a go. If I can do it, anyone can.



Tina Arbondis plays Annie in *Annie's Coming Out*.

Annie comes to Bristol

LOCAL GROUP NEWS

8 year-old Michael Little from the Bristol and District Spastics Society went to the western premiere of *Annie's Coming Out* in February. Here he describes the film in his own words



Michael Little

we have lift off." Off they went in the car.

A lady came and worked with the hospital. The girls and boys had never been outside. The lady is called Jessica. Jessica made a playgroup.

The boys and girls did not

know what rain was, so Jessica took all of the children outside.

Later on the rain came down, the children loved it. Jessica rushed them inside.

Jessica took Anne to talk to her. She said the hospital is going to do a test on you to see if you really can spell. After the test the doctor came. He said that she failed.

That night somebody tried to murder Anne. When morning came Jessica did the playgroup again. It was Anne's birthday. Jessica gave Anne a book called *Catch 22*. Anne read it right to the end.

Later on when Jessica was working with Anne the nurse came and said "What are you doing with Anne at this time? It's her bed time." Jessica said "At this time? Well I'm taking her home. Ready for take off 54321,

After court the manager lost. Anne can go home with Jessica. The End.

I felt very lucky I had a Mum.

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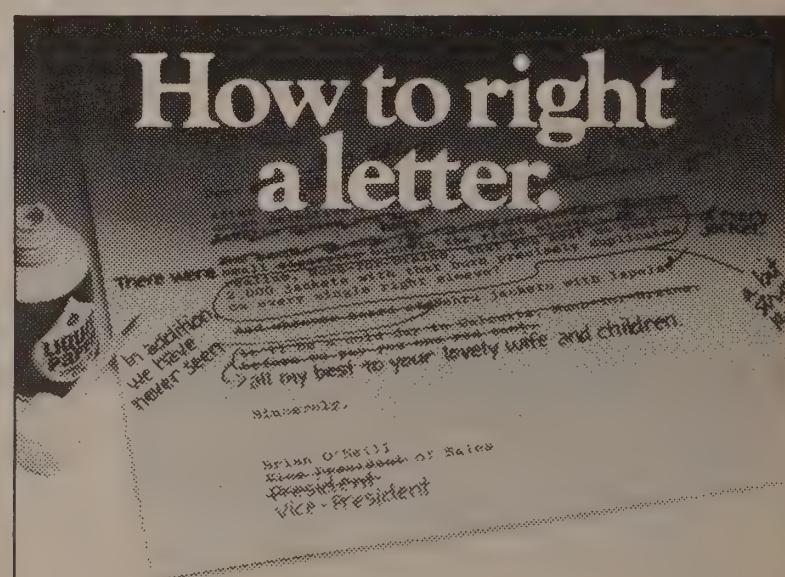
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Neath Hill Professional Workshop is a unit of The Spastics Society.

John F. Sculpher



The Duchess meets 10 year-old Janine Prescott and receives a plate of biscuits which she made in her cookery class. Headmaster Stanley Johnson looks on. Lord Morley stands behind.



Fred Davey, driver and gardener, shows the Duchess the school's new bus. Standing behind are the Mayoress and Mayor of Exeter and John T. Stephens, Chairman of the Devon group.

Many happy returns!

On the silver jubilee of the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society, the Duchess of Kent visits the school she opened in 1971

The Duchess of Kent joined in a play tea party and spoke to all 40 children at Vranch House School on her visit on 13 March.

It was a day she clearly enjoyed and she stayed 20 minutes longer than her programmed hour.

"I was rather nervous about how I should handle the event," says Stanley Johnson, Head of Vranch House School. "But I decided to just let the children take over. She was marvellous with them."

The Duchess met Mrs Joyce Smith, Chairman of The Spastics Society. Dick Sharp, Chairman of the West Region of the Society, John Roberts, Senior Regional Officer for the Region and the officers from Devon and Exeter Spastics Society were also there.

After she unveiled a plaque in the main hall of the school to commemorate her visit, the Duchess said how nice it was to be back at the school she opened in 1971, and commented on its happy atmosphere. "You feel as you walk in that the children are happy," she said. "The school has a real atmosphere of warmth and love and caring... Here there are no 'we's and 'they's.' That, she said, was a message that should go all over the world."

On her tour of the school, the Duchess watched a Peto Method class in the Therapy Department and talked to physiotherapists.

Then she visited 4 classes. One sung for her, another had done some cooking for her. She joined in with the nursery class's water play, blowing bubbles with them, and also watched the special care class playing.

"The children had been excited all week looking forward to the event," says Stanley Johnson.

"On the day, one little boy asked the Duchess her name. So she replied 'Katherine'. And it was only when she was going out that the little boy realised she was the Duchess of Kent."

When she entered the main hall, the youngest girl in the school, 3 year-old Clare Pike, presented the Duchess with a posy. The Duchess talked to her for several minutes and then pulled out a daisy from the bouquet and gave it to Clare as a memento.

Then, as she signed the visitors book, John T Stephens, Chairman of the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society, pointed out that hers was also the first name in the book.

"My writing hasn't changed much then," she said.

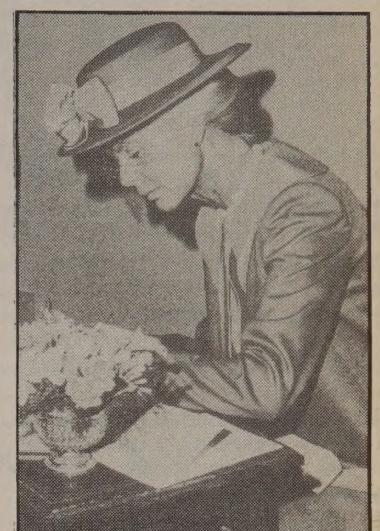
She then saw a swimming class at the pool.

Even as she left, the Duchess couldn't resist having a small "walkabout" amongst the children who had assembled in the car park.

"As she was getting into her

LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Edited by Simon Crompton



The Duchess signs the school's visitors book.

car I invited her back to the school," says Stanley Johnson. "She said she'd love to, and she'd have to make it sooner next time."



Lavina, Duchess of Norfolk, talks with pupils at Hamilton House and Michael Peters, Chairman of the Brighton group.

30 years at Brighton

Brighton, Hove and District Spastics Society celebrated their 30th anniversary on 5 March with a reception at Hamilton House day centre attended by their president, Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk, their patrons, the Mayors of Hove and Brighton, John Cox, Derek Ashcroft and several founder members.

70 guests were shown a video of the activities of Hamilton House, compiled by Bill Iredale and welfare officer Iris Boswood who retired last month after 27 years at Hamilton House.



Founder members of the group: Mrs Fenton, Miss Robinson, Miss Willis and Mr Payne.

Widnes Group collects High Performance bus

Widnes Spastic Fellowship Group now has its own 14-seater minibus – thanks to the efforts of a team of highly-skilled drivers who drove 1,000 miles and raised £16,000.

The Talbot bus, which can take 3 wheelchairs, was officially handed over to Mrs Joyce Smith, Chairman of The Spastics Society, at Park Crescent, London on 28 February and members of the

Widnes group came down to collect it.

"It will make a huge difference to us, not least financially," says John Gallagher, Chairman of the Widnes Spastics Fellowship.

"Up to now we've been paying £7.50 a day to a local minibus company to bring our members to the day centre, and have had to hire out big buses for our outings to the countryside and

museums."

John Gallagher believes that more people will now be able to come to the centre, both for the recreational and handicraft activities in the day time and the social evenings.

The High Performance Club held their Endurance Drive on 2 November last year and raised money through donations and sponsorship.

Doug McKenzie



The presentation at Park Crescent. From left to right: Dickie Henderson from the Stars Organisation for Spastics; Mrs Joyce Smith, Chairman of The Spastics Society; Jane Stewart-Smith of the High Performance Club; Brian Bellis who attends the Widnes centre; Graham Bigg and Bill Clifford from the High Performance Club; John Gallagher, Chairman of the Widnes Spastic Fellowship; Ron Cottrell and Brian Terry of HPC. At the front: Frank Vernon from the Widnes centre and John Cox, Director of The Spastics Society.

AVAILABLE FROM 15 APRIL 1985



The Society's latest film takes the format of a television news programme with reports linked by two studio presenters (Nick Ross and Sue Smith). The film/video includes: an original and entertaining explanation of cerebral palsy; a film report showing integration in action, with a group of able bodied people meeting and exchanging thoughts and opinions with a group of people with cerebral palsy; and an insight into the aims and objectives of the Society for the present and future, as seen by the Director of the Society, Sir John Cox, and the Director of Social Services.

An excellent discussion stimulus, this film is designed for general audiences, and accompanying support literature is available from the Film and Publicity Officer, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Telephone: 01 636 5020.

Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

Do my old assessment reports still apply?

When I was fifteen I went on an assessment course run by The Spastics Society, which did not help. This was mostly due to the fact that I have great difficulty in using my hands, especially when I am working against time.

I was expected to do all the fiddly things like handling small screws and putting them into boxes and using a screwdriver. I also had to do some written tests which were against time too.

I did not do very well because at that time my English and Maths were not very good, and I was a slow learner and not used to being timed. So I panicked, because I knew I could not compete against the clock and this made me very upset.

Nobody offered me any support and the reports said that I was incapable of any further education or training.

That was ten years ago. Since then I have worked hard and I went to an adult study centre where they were good enough to teach me.

Two years ago I went to a college for disabled people where I passed a City and Guilds exam in Numeracy, which I thought would prove that I was not as useless as the

reports said I was.

When I went to see the DRO after I finished college he said that although my college report was good he could not do anything because he still had the assessment course report to go on.

This seems to be so unfair. Please could you tell me if the DRO can really use the report after all this time?

Thank you for letting me have your views about the course which you attended ten years ago.

As I expect you are aware, The Spastics Society has been running these short residential courses for many years and thousands of young people have attended them.

For quite a large majority it has been a memorable and enjoyable week, though I can imagine that for some, like yourself, the results were disappointing. I think most of us hope that we will do better than we actually do, and it is hard when our immediate dreams and plans are squashed.

I was concerned to know that you did not feel that any support was available to you during the course, as I know the careers advisory officers try to use the time available to talk over positive possibilities for the future.

I have, however, sought the views of Jacque Paulson, the Society's Senior Careers Advisory Officer, and she too is sorry that the experience was such a negative one for you.

Here are her comments. "We are conscious of the practical problems which often confront students and it is not the intention to accentuate difficulties, although for some it may draw



Simon Crompton

attention to them. The tests can also enable young people to recognise and make fuller use of their abilities and they are timed in order to give a more objective appraisal of performance.

"Sometimes it may feel that support is lacking when a comment is made which is not looked for by the individual.

"Ten years ago facilities in further education were much more limited than they are today and it may have been that when your correspondent left school there was no appropriate follow-on course available.

"Whilst some reports may be valid for a long time, our assessment course reports are an indication of functioning at a particular time and after two or three years one must allow, and look, for changes which can occur through maturity, approach to tasks and experience in the intervening period.

"It may still be useful to refer to the report after some years, but it must be read in the knowledge of the context in which it was prepared."

Jacque Paulson has suggested that if you would like to contact her at The Spastics Society, The White Building, Fitzalan Square, Sheffield S1 2AY, tel: Sheffield 753411, she would be glad, with your permission, to look at the report and speak to your DRO on your behalf.

CLASSIFIED

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TALBOT 1100 cc HIGH-TOP VAN. Converted to carry wheelchair. Back drops down on hydraulic switch. 9,000 miles. Colour red. £5,250 omo. Contact Mrs Weeden on (0873) 830 225.

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Mrs. Beeny on (0424) 444693.

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MAN PENFRIEND WANTED, intelligent, late 20s/30s, for pretty French girl, late 20s, librarian in S. French university. Cp but ambulant, and intelligible speech - also excellent English! Enjoys life, has wide interests and sense of humour. Write in first instance to: Françoise, c/o 7 Fulbrooke Road, Cambridge.

FEMALE PENFRIEND WANTED, preferably someone living abroad. I am 30 years-old and enjoy travelling, listening to Country and Western music and writing letters. Please write to Marion Nelson, Scotsraig, 18 Park Road, Paisley, Scotland.

FEMALE PENFRIEND WANTED for 31 year-old man with cerebral palsy, not seriously disabled and quite active. Lives alone in bedsit flat. Would like to hear from someone in a similar position, aged preferably 25-30 years. My interests include group holidays and day trips, writing letters, listening to all types of music, reading and photography. Also a member of a local PHAB group. Please write to Paul Drage, 39A Alfred Street, Kettering, Northants.

Holidays

VARCOE HOUSE HOLIDAY FLATS. Run by the Cornish Spastics Society. Two self-catering, well equipped flats especially adapted for disabled people. Very close to sandy beach at Par, near St. Austell. Seasonal prices range from only £40-£60 per week. Details from booking secretary Mr L E Elliott, 7 Morview Road, Widgates, Nr. Looe. Spastics Society staff are also eligible.

8-BERTH HOLIDAY CARAVAN to let at Felixstowe by the local Spastics Society. There is a ramp up to double entrance doors. The shower and toilet room door is wide enough for a wheelchair. The caravan park is situated only a short distance from the beach and has a shop, bar, club, swimming pool and children's play area. Rates are £50 per week in July and August and £40 per week during the rest of the season. Apply to Miss J M Wood, 50 High Road East, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9PU. Tel: (03942) 283794.

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

The Nature and Management of Cerebral Palsy with particular reference to Older Children and Adults includes lectures on the medical background of cerebral palsy, communication disorders, diets and eating difficulties, lifting and carrying and particular disorders such as spacial and perceptual difficulties. 9 May. £10 inclusive of tuition, coffee, lunch and tea.

Being Assertive - an Introductory Workshop. 17-19 May. Tuition £50, residence £37.

Use of Video for Assessment and Recording. 22-24 May. Tuition £43, residence £37.

The School Leaver with Special Needs - a multidisciplinary course. 28-31 May. Tuition £50, residence £55.50.

Advances in the Care of Children with Special Needs is a course for NNEB holders 2-9 June. £275 inclusive.

Working towards Assisted and Independent Feeding - the difficulties of children and adults with cerebral palsy, is for staff of any discipline, volunteer helpers or parents who wish to familiarise themselves with techniques for helping children or adults with cerebral palsy towards independent feeding. 8 June. £10 inclusive of tuition, coffee, lunch and tea.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551

Conferences and Leisure

SPOD (Sexual and Personal Relationships of the Disabled) courses and workshops in April, May and June are: "Workshop - Short Term Relationships between Volunteers and Disabled People", 17 April; "Sexuality and Physical Disability", 14-15 May; "A General Multidisciplinary Course on the Sexual Side of Physical Disability", 23 May and 19 June; "Sexuality and Mental Handicap", 12-13 June; "Sex Education for Physically Disabled Young People", 20 June; "Workshop for Disabled People - on Sexuality and Disability", 26 June. Contact Barbara Feinberg, SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London. Tel: 01-607 8851/2.

Creative Living '85 is the theme of the CRYPT (Creative Young People Together) Foundation's conference and annual general meeting to be held at the Chichester College of Technology on 20 April. Speakers will include television and theatre actor Nabil Shaban, a professional cartoonist, Liz Briggs from the Hampshire Centre for Independent Living and poet Howard Sergeant. A new video, *Arts and Disability in the Community*, will also be shown. Contact John Davis, Director of CRYPT, Tel: (0323) 768831 or Val Fethney, Tel: (0243) 670000.

A Lecture Programme on Caring for the Elderly will be held at the East Anglia Exhibition Centre in Norwich on 24-25 April. It will cover new government legislation on nursing and rest homes, recovery from strokes, geriatric nursing, living with arthritis and back pain. There will also be an exhibition of aids. Contact Sue Cox, Dunbar Exhibitions, Box 13 Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1YE. Tel: (0243) 828290.

Grief and Loss - Working with Families Experiencing Disability, Terminal Illness and Bereavement is a day seminar to be held at the National Children's Bureau on 30 April. It examines practical solutions to complex and stressful problems encountered by caring professionals. Price £19.55 for members of the National Children's Bureau, £25.88 for non-members (including VAT). Contact The Conference Office, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE. Tel: 01-278 9441.

Recreational week/weekend in the Lake District. The North East Region of The Spastics Society has organised a weekend on 3-5 May and a week on 20-27 July at Bendrigg Lodge, Kendal, Cumbria, which provide the opportunity to try out activities like canoeing, sailing, climbing, absailing, horseriding, photography as well as making friends and going on visits. Cost: £38 (weekend) or £118 (week). Contact Sue Smith, 26 St Margaret's Court, Durham. Tel: (0385) 62127.

Caring Computers is a full-day seminar and exhibition at Sutton Central Library, London on 10 May. It aims to enable professionals from a wide range of disciplines to pool experience and spark ideas on the many ways that computers can make life easier, more fun and more challenging for the handicapped community. Cost £38. Contact Jennifer Woeller at Sutton Central Library, St. Nicholas Way, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1EA. Tel: 01-661 5050.

Microelectronic Aids for Disabled People is a day course organised by the Stars Organisation for Spastics at Good Neighbours House on 15 May. It will cover a range of technical aids, equipment and techniques developed for disabled people. There will be a small exhibition. Price £5-£9. Contact Elizabeth Mitchelmore-Hawkins, Good Neighbours House, 38 Datchelor House, Camberwell, London.

Do we Communicate? Liaison between the Professions about Language and Speech Handicap is a one-day seminar held by VOCAL (Voluntary Organisations Communication and Language) and the Society of Community Medicine on 31 May at the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1. 8 speakers - speech therapists, health visitors, Paediatricians, teachers, doctors and occupational therapists - will explain the types of cases they refer to others and what happens next. Price £20 (£17 for VOCAL and SCM members). Contact Mike Burkert, VOCAL, St Peter's Office, South Western Hospital, Landor Road, London SW9 9NU. Tel: 01-274 4029.

Is SESAME for me? is a course for therapists, teachers, nurses and others working in the field of disability, to be held in London on 15-19 July. It will give them a chance to assess their own potential to train as therapists for SESAME, which is a charity promoting drama and movement therapy for mentally and physically disabled people. Cost £65. Applications, to be made before 21 April, to SESAME, Christchurch, 27 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NY. Tel: 01-633 9690.

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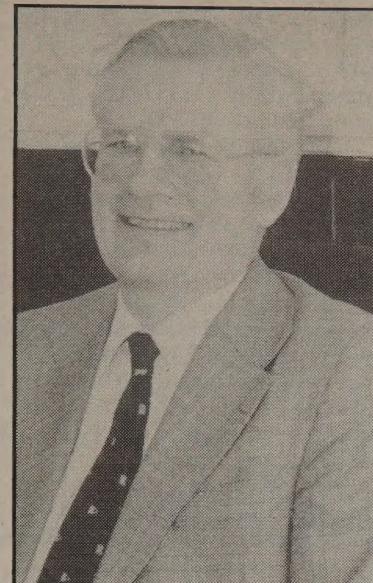
Ian McBain is the new Director of The Scottish Council for Spastics. He took over from Commander Archibald Cameron on 1 April.

Since 1965 he has been Scottish Director of Mercantile Credit Company Ltd, the finance arm of the Barclays Bank Group of Companies.

Before that, he was commissioned in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and undertook various roles in Sales and Marketing with Hoover.

"The Scottish Council for Spastics must continue to take an active and leading role on behalf of disabled people in Scotland and I look forward to being part of the team continuing the fight to provide services which are so desperately needed," he says.

"We also intend to see that the close working relationship between The Spastics Society and the Scottish Council continues.



Such a relationship can only benefit disabled people throughout the whole of the United Kingdom."

Tom Wallace

Tom Wallace died suddenly on 12 February 1985.

Mr Wallace joined the staff at Throngrove, The Spastics Society's agricultural centre at Gillingham, Dorset, in January 1969 as house parent and became warden in 1977.

During his time at Throngrove, he and his wife, Mabel, worked to make this a comfortable and happy home for the residents in their care.

He was much loved and will be sadly missed. He leaves a widow and 2 daughters.

TR



Kids for Kids show. Ruth Cottrell from The Spastics Society's London Region collected a cheque for £1,000 in Hornsey Town Hall, London, on 23 February, after a dance show involving 200 children in 25 routines. The charity show was presented by the Boden Studios which teaches dance and music to over 600 children every week. The Deputy Mayors of Enfield and Haringey also attended the performance.

Cameras flood in for PFTD

For further information contact Photography for the Disabled, 190 Secrett House, Ham Close, Ham, Richmond, Surrey.



Arthur Scrase amidst an avalanche of cameras.

Hello, goodbye!

Amanda Jordan has returned to The Spastics Society with her 4 month old son, George, after 6 months maternity leave.

David Hanson, who replaced her as Lobbyist, has now returned to the Society's North West Region.

Linda Avery has temporarily left the department for the Society's new strategy planning group.

In the picture, from left to right: David Hanson, Chris Parker, Departmental Secretary, Eileen Fry, Employment Research Officer, Sharron Saint Michael, Information Assistant, George and Amanda Jordan.

200 pieces of photographic equipment will be distributed to disabled photographers and schools for disabled children thanks to an appeal by Photography for the Disabled.

The appeal, sponsored by Konica UK Ltd, was launched last Christmas.

"I can't thank all the magazines, newspapers, TV and radio companies enough for the publicity they have so generously given to our appeal," says Arthur Scrase, president of PFTD.

"We still need equipment, and we will keep the appeal running as long as possible."

PFTD will be exhibiting at the consumer photographic show at Photoworld, Olympia on 26-30 April. There will also be a collection point for equipment.

ford Street, London WC1A 1AH. Tel: 01-637 1881.

The Dulux Community Projects Scheme gives awards of paint to projects which help the community and whose funds are limited. Since the awards started in 1980, £170,000 worth of paint has been donated to some 1,000 voluntary groups throughout the country. For application forms, which must be returned by 31 May, contact Dulux Community Projects Office, Welbeck Limited, 2 Endell Street, London, WC2H 9EW. Tel: 01-836 6677.

Armchairshopping scheme which benefits charity. Benefits is a new mail-order catalogue published by Co-Aid Ltd offering goods from cookware to cars, as well as services such as insurance schemes, at competitive prices. The supplying companies send customers charity vouchers on completion of a purchase and the customer sends these to the charity of his or her choice, which then receives a cash donation. For a copy of Benefits, send £1 (for postage and packing) to Benefits, Capital House, 20-22 Craven Road, London W2 3PX.

Applications are now welcome from workers in charities and voluntary agencies for a postgraduate course leading to an MA degree in Public and Social Administration at Brunel University, starting in October 1985. The course may be pursued full-time over one year or part-time over 2 years. Enquiries to SAM, Department of Government, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH. Tel: 01-580 8466.



The industrious bee. The Spastics Society's Spring appeal was mailed on 12 March in a first day cover of the 17p stamp from the Post Office's insect series. The bumble bee on the stamp also appears in a garden scene on the envelope and links with the subject of the appeal - The Spastics Society's Industrial Units. The mailing is the first to include a combined letter and donation form personalised using the latest laser printing techniques. The mailing is to 850,000 people and it aims to raise £716,000.

and sheltered employment. Free from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB (a large SAE appreciated).

The Good Book Guide caters for people who might find it hard to get to a good bookshop. For £8.50, subscribers receive a quarterly colour magazine listing and reviewing around 600 new books. There is no obligation to buy, but any book will be sent on request for the normal retail price. A complimentary copy of the guide and more information can be obtained from The Good Book Guide, 91 Great Russell Street, London WC1V 3PS. Tel: 01-580 8466.

Holidays

Disaway Holidays with Disabled People has 3 holidays planned for 1985 - to Italy in June, Perthshire and Corfu in September. Since each disabled person travels with a helper, the trust is looking for volunteer helpers who get substantial

reductions on holiday prices. For more information contact Frances and Roy Sheridan, 2 Charles Road, London SW19 3BD. Tel: 01-543 3431.

Horizon holidays have brought out the 1985 edition of their Easy Access Guide to the hotels in their standard brochure, giving information about the situation of hotels, beach access, steps and door widths. Free, from the Information Department, Horizon Holidays, Broadway, Edgbaston Five Ways, Birmingham B15 1DB. Tel: 021 643 2727, ext 4603

Canal cruises. Chesham UNA Narrowboat Ltd, a non-profit-making limited company, has a 70-foot narrowboat specially adapted for disabled people, which is available for day trips or holiday cruises. Contact UNA Canal Cruises, 38 Brays Meadow, Hyde Heath, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5RY. Tel: (0494) 771792 (evenings)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

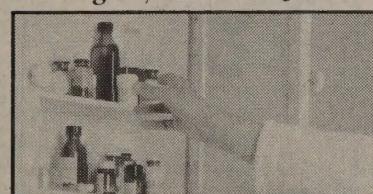
Interested in a trip to Morocco? As part of International Youth Year, The Spastics Society's Sport and Recreation Department and Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre are running a 2-week expedition for able-bodied and disabled people to Morocco starting on 11 November. The group will look at the physical and geographical make-up of the country and its cultural development. Individuals or groups who are interested should contact Howard Bailey, Sport and Recreation Department, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

Cooks, home-brewers and wine-makers! Your favourite recipes are needed for 2 beginner's guides being prepared by the London Region of The Spastics Society. Each booklet will give general instruction and hints plus recipes. Individual contributors will be credited. The booklets will be on sale (price £1 each) at the Fitzroy Square Fair in June and after that in the region's temporary shops. Contact Alan Conroy or Charlotte Griffiths at the London Regional Office, 32-38 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND, Tel: 01-387 5505.

Employment fact sheets. The Lobbying Department of The Spastics Society has produced 2 more fact sheets on help available for disabled people in employment - "Release for Training Scheme" and "Individual Training throughout with an employer". Contact Eileen Fry, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Cres-

cent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020 ext 256.

Personal Care, the 1985 updated edition, has been published by the Oxfordshire Health Authority. Aimed at disabled people, their helpers and those professionally concerned with their care, it gives information on aids and equipment, provides guidelines on its selection and suggests ways of overcoming different problems. Price £3.50 (plus 70p postage and packing) from Equipment for the Disabled, Mary Marlborough Lodge, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington, Oxford OX3 7DL.



Some Drugs Can Harm Your Unborn Child

Tell the doctor if you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant. Some of the drugs you can buy without a prescription can be harmful too. So tell the chemist if you are pregnant or trying for a baby.



Drugs warning poster. The Health Education Council has published a poster warning mothers-to-be that some drugs can harm unborn children if taken when pregnant. 30,000 posters are being sent to GP's surgeries. The poster has come out after pressure from the Crosby Women's Group, which has been campaigning for warning labels on some drugs. The poster is available from the Health Education Council, 78 New Ox-

Government gives £500,000 for anti-smoking campaign

To coincide with National No Smoking Day (20 March), John Patten, junior health minister, announced that the Government had made available £500,000 for an anti-smoking campaign aimed at women.

The TV campaign will be screened soon and it will be supported by advertisements in leading women's magazines.

Mr. Patten also said that the DHSS are planning to issue guidelines to health authorities about making health service premises no smoking areas.

...but adverts attract smokers

The British Medical Association has launched another missile in its campaign against the advertising and promotion of tobacco which began last October.

Cigarette Advertising and Smoking: A Review of the Evidence, published last month, sets out in a straightforward way the reasons for the campaign and counters the arguments put forward by the tobacco industry and its supporters.

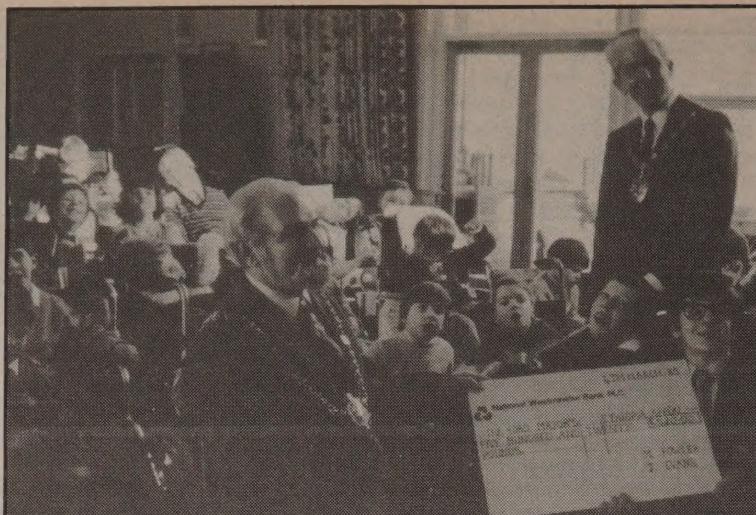
The booklet points out, for example, that tobacco is the only advertised product which is hazardous when used as intended.

It also explodes the myth that tobacco advertising only redistributes the market share among competing brands and does not increase total demand.

It is particularly concerned about the influence of advertising on children – the next generation of smokers and a vital market for the tobacco companies.

The Spastics Society supports the BMA campaign.

Cigarette Advertising and Smoking is available from the BMA, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP, price 75p.



Presenting the cheque to the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Councillor Bill Buttell, are Stefon West (far right) and Keith Harris (beside him). The Mayor of Taff Ely stands behind.

Pupils raise £520 for Ethiopia

Two pupils at The Spastics Society's Craig-y-Parc School in Cardiff raised £520 in aid of children starving in Ethiopia.

For 2 weeks in February nearly all of the 55 pupils at the school took part in a series of sponsored events including spelling words on typewriters, swimming, walking, riding, writing computer programmes, crawling down the corridor and riding an electric wheelchair around the hall.

Keith Harris, aged 9, and Stefon West, 12, passed on their

idea to headmistress Maureen Fowler after watching television.

"We were watching the news and I thought these children are not getting food and shelter, so that's how I got the idea," says Stefon.

"I liked all the events, and I think the others enjoyed doing it too."

On 4 March, Keith and Stefon presented the cheque to the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, whose Ethiopian Appeal has now reached £28,000.

DISTECH calls for comprehensive public transport system

The Government should make available adequate resources for a comprehensive public transport system, and organisations of and for disabled people should set up a unit to lobby the UK and European parliaments.

These two key resolutions were passed by 170 users and providers of transport services at a 2-day DISTECH (Disability and Technology) conference in Manchester last month.

Nigel Smith of The Spastics Society, who organised the conference, hopes to develop plans

for a transport unit later this month.

The conference, on developments in transport systems and technology for disabled people, was one of several DISTECHs being held around the country.

At the opening, John Cox spoke of the Society's interest in transport, as a provider, as an agency which set up the Cleveland Dial-A-Ride (see page 6) and as initiator of a working party (later called ADAPT, Action on Disabled Person's Transport) which produced two reports.

He looked forward to the day when the activities of disabled people would not be restricted by lack of suitable transport. "That day must come because it is only fair and just that it should", he said.

Nigel Smith thought the conference was a step in the right direction. "Merely getting together to talk is important if we are to move forward," he said.

Full report next month.

Disability Now

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he spent the night at a British Airways desk in Jamaica. "We sent a message to base camp saying 'You never told us we had to base at the airport,'" he said.

Then came a sail to Grand Bahama: "I was sick for hours but apart from that it was an incredible trip and I'll never forget it."

In Nassau he energetically demolished the "Retreat" – an old building in poor repair.

"There are improvements which could be made," he said. "I didn't have that much to do at the base camp at Barbary Beach." Annalisa den Engelse returned on 15 January, having been on the Operation's support vessel Zebu from Lisbon to the Caicos Islands since October.

"I did have some effect on the group," she said. "I think they're now more aware of what it's like to be deaf."

Robert Jones (left) talking to Sandy McCarthy, chief executive of Operation Raleigh.

Tony Newton needs help

Tony Newton, Minister for Social Security, is anxious to win the cooperation of disabled people for a national survey conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS). It was launched last month.

The survey aims to find out how many disabled people, adults and children, there are in the United Kingdom, their circumstances and their needs, as a basis for future DHSS planning.

"It is very important, if the survey is to yield the true overall picture we need, that we should get a willing response from those disabled people who are approached," said Tony Newton in a letter to John Cox.

Questionnaires are being sent to 100,000 addresses "selected at random". From the replies, 10,000 adults and 2,000 children with significant disabilities and health problems will be selected for interviewing between July and November.

The survey will be carried out on a voluntary basis and all information will be treated in confidence.

Next year there will be a simi-

lar survey of disabled people living in residential centres.

The last national survey was published in 1971. It did not include children or disabled people in residential centres and The Spastics Society expressed concern last November that these two important groups should not be left out this time.

"We hope that any readers approached will help to make this survey really effective," said John Cox. "If we are to have any progress on disability policies we must get our facts straight."

Sidney Harris



Tony Newton

Community care on the cheap

The Department of Health's plan to close long-stay hospitals and move nearly 100,000 mentally handicapped or ill people into the community could be disastrous, said an all-party Commons social services committee last month. It made 101 recommendations to improve the care in the community policy and fund it properly.

The committee, chaired by Mrs Renée Short, MP, spent a year investigating the situation, both in Britain and the United States.

"Any fool can close a long-stay hospital: it takes more time and trouble to do it properly and compassionately," the committee told Norman Fowler. "The minister must ensure that mental illness or mental handicap hospital provision is not reduced without demonstrably adequate alternative services being pro-

vided beforehand."

The report recommends, among other things, an individual care plan for each person leaving hospital, a central bridging fund to pay for new community services, obligations on local authorities and housing associations to provide housing, the re-training of doctors, and a public relations programme on behalf of mentally disabled people.

The recommendations have been welcomed by many organisations, including the Royal National Society for the Mentally Handicapped, MENCAP, the National Union of Public Employees, the Royal College of Nursing and The Spastics Society. *More detailed assessment next month. Second Report of the Commons Social Services Committee: Community Care, Stationery Office, £7.65.*



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